• JOHNNY WINTER • TESLA • JOHN LEE HOOKER • DAVE MUSTAINE •

GUITAR TRICKS

DIGITAL EDITION

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FEBRUARY

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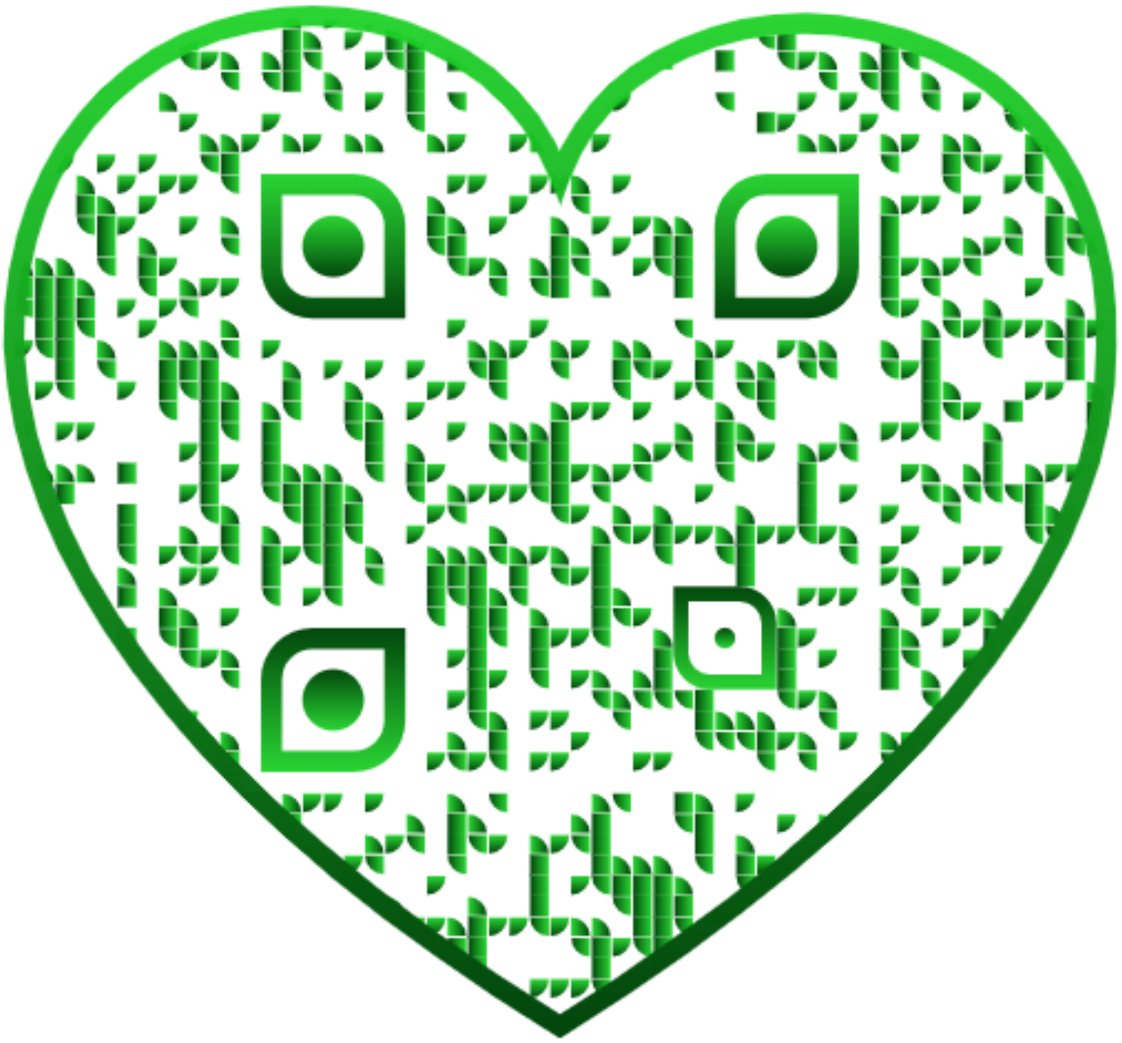

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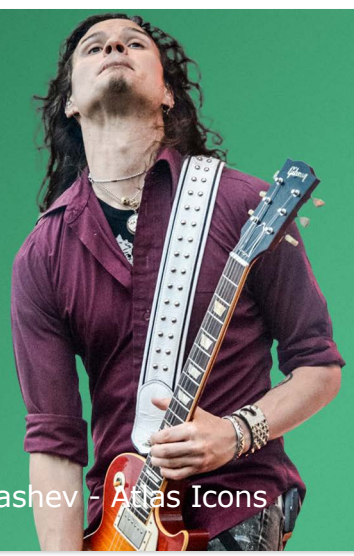

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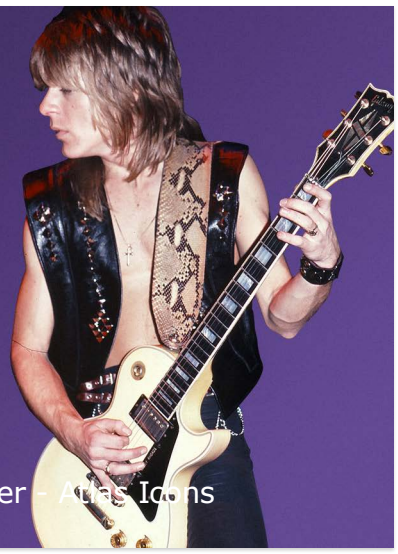

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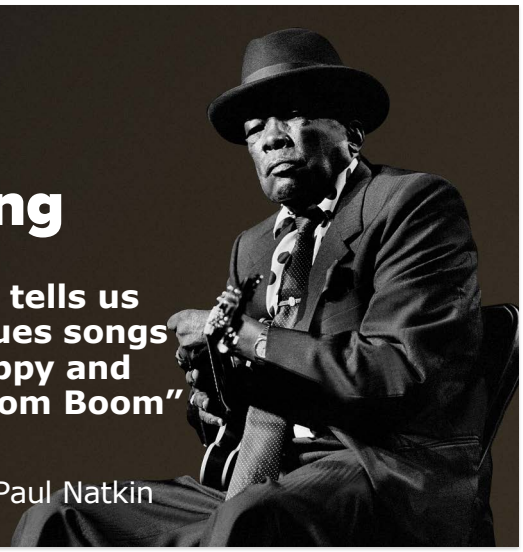

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JOHNNY WINTER

by **John Stix**

Playing blues guitar has always been about a release of passion. Some guitarists let go with their shirts tucked in. These guys play with Steely Dan. Others, like Johnny Winter, just let it all hang out. There's nothing polite about the blues that Johnny Winter played during his lifetime. It was raw, energetic, fiery, shirt-tails-out kind of music. Johnny played with Muddy Waters. He built a career playing blues and blues rock that was celebrated enough to headline Madison Square Garden. He was revered for blues songs like "Be Careful with a Fool" and blues rockers like "Rock and Roll Hoochie Koo." Johnny Winter owns Dylan's "Highway 61 Revisted" with the same authority that Hendrix owns "All Along the Watchtower." It's definitive. When asked for a list of albums guitarists should have in their collection, Johnny replied without hesitation.

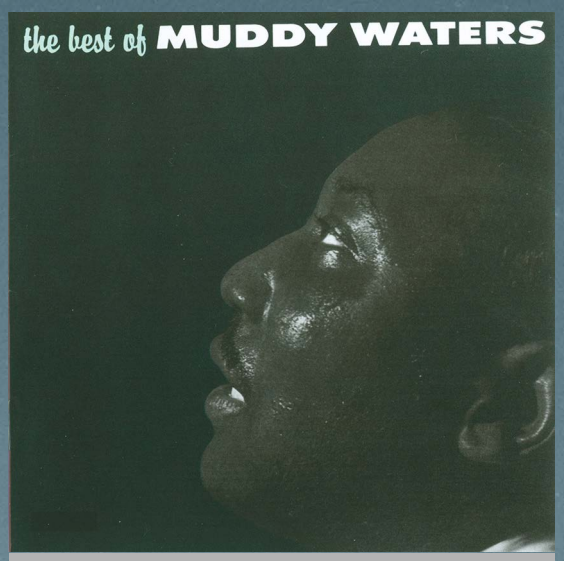
"Definitely both volumes of Robert Johnson (*King of the Delta Blues Singers Vols. 1* and 2) because he's that much better. You should have the *Best of Muddy Waters*, *Sonny Boy Williamson*, and *Little Walter*, on Chess records. To me, they really contain the best. Albert King *Born Under a Bad Sign* on Stax is a great album. B.B. had one of the first blues records that was on the market in album form. I bought 45s from everybody. B.B. had a record called *B.B. King Sings the Blues* on RPM records. I got wiped out by it. It was so good." ■

Johnny Winter by Paul Natkin

01

King of the Delta Blues Singers, Vols. 1 and 2
Robert Johnson

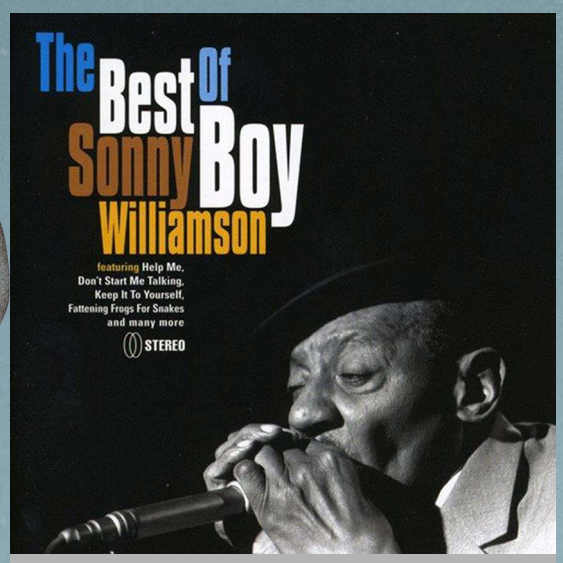
Get it on iTunes



02

Best of Muddy Waters
Muddy Waters

Available at amazon



03

Best of Sonny Boy Williamson
Sonny Boy Williamson

Available at amazon

04

Best of Little Walter
Little Walter

Available at amazon

"B.B. HAD A RECORD CALLED *B.B. KING SINGS THE BLUES* ON RPM RECORDS. I GOT WIPED OUT BY IT. IT WAS SO GOOD."

Johnny Winter by Charles Auringer – Atlas Icons

05

Born Under a Bad Sign
Albert King

Get it on iTunes

06

B.B. King Singin' the Blues
B.B. King

Get it on iTunes

EVERY INSTRUMENT HAS A VOICE.

MAKE SURE YOURS HAS ONE THAT INSPIRES YOU TO BE A MORE HONEST ARTIST.

REVEREND

WELL PLAYED

DAVE MUSTAINE

ON "GIVE BLOOD" FROM PETE TOWNSHEND'S *DEEP END FACE TO FACE* DVD/CD

Dave Mustaine by Neil Zlozower - Atlas Icons

Townshend is one of my all time favorite guitar players, attitude-wise. I don't like his singing so much, but I notice his arranging. Using the percussion and the horn production was very good. Obviously, the song is crying out for a kind of cooperation among mankind. It's a good song. I think the whole thing about trying to make people give a little bit more of themselves is a good idea. Right now, mankind itself is a little bit less concerned about one another. I'm not going to say that we're reaching the end of the world as we know it. But I think there's a lot of animosity and hatred among

> “TOWNSHEND IS ONE OF MY ALL TIME FAVORITE GUITAR PLAYERS, ATTITUDE-WISE.

MUSTAINE

people, and I like anyone who has a positive message. I’ve always liked Pete Townshend in The Who. I liked *Empty Glass* a lot. That’s when I was just really starting to find a direction – looking for a lead figure on guitar. I thought Townshend was a psychopath swinging his arm around. “Rough Boys” is a song of his I can relate to. I think this is more of a big band sound. Sometimes it’s kind of peculiar when somebody decides to go solo – how they have to go so overboard at it to make this one person sound equivalent to the band he came from via completely full-blown overproduction and over arrangement. But I respect him. ■

DAVE MUSTAINE

Dave Mustaine by Ken Settle

"Give Blood" from Pete Townshend's *Deep End Face to Face* DVD/CD

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NUGGETS: PLAY LIKE AN ALLMAN BROTHER

By **Dave Rubin**

The original Allman Brothers Band was a rhythm, blues, and improvisational powerhouse, which also counted tasty elements of country, jazz, and folk music among their influences and expansive breadth of material. The twin guitar juggernaut of Duane Allman and Dickey Betts came to the blues partly through their Southern birthright, and their great love and understanding of the genre. Like their predecessors and peers, they utilized blues, minor and major pentatonic scales, and the Mixolydian mode. However, when it came to country and folk-flavored tunes, Dickey often brought a "secret" weapon to the party with the six-note major hexatonic scale containing the crucial 4th in addition to the five notes of the major pentatonic scale (root, 2nd, 3rd, 5th, and 6th). Be aware the hexatonic scale could also be seen as the Mixolydian mode minus the b7th degree. The result is a more melodic scale than the major pentatonic due to the half-step between the 4th and 5th degrees. Equally significant is the way it provides the root of the IV chord to better negotiate I-IV chord changes, so common to blues-based music.

Along with teaching private lessons in NYC, **Dave Rubin** has written over 100 blues, classic rock, jazz, and country guitar books for the Hal Leonard Corporation. His latest is Inside Rock Guitar: Four Decades of the Greatest Electric Rock Guitarists. **www.musicdispatch.com**

Dickey Betts 1975 by Neil Zlowzower - Atlas Icons

FIG. 1

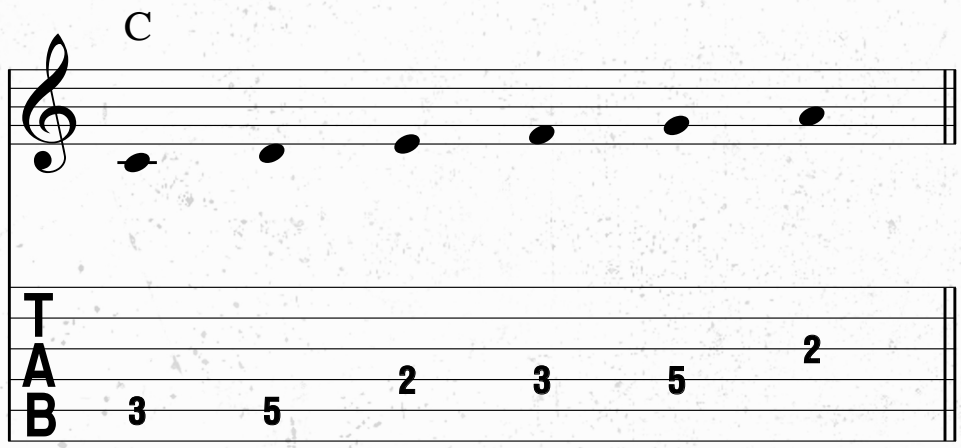


FIG. 1 shows the C major hexatonic scale in one octave in the key of C for ease of visualization. **Performance Tip:** Start with the middle finger and continue up the scale using all four fingers without changing hand position.

FIG. 2

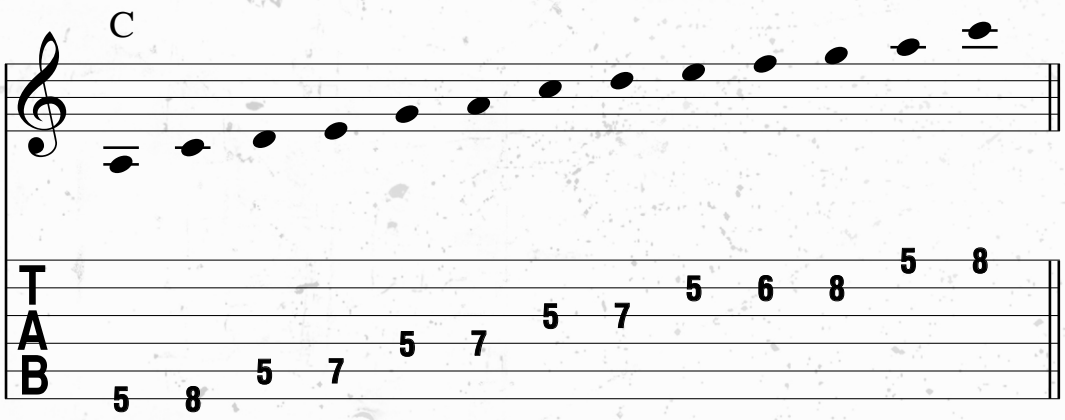
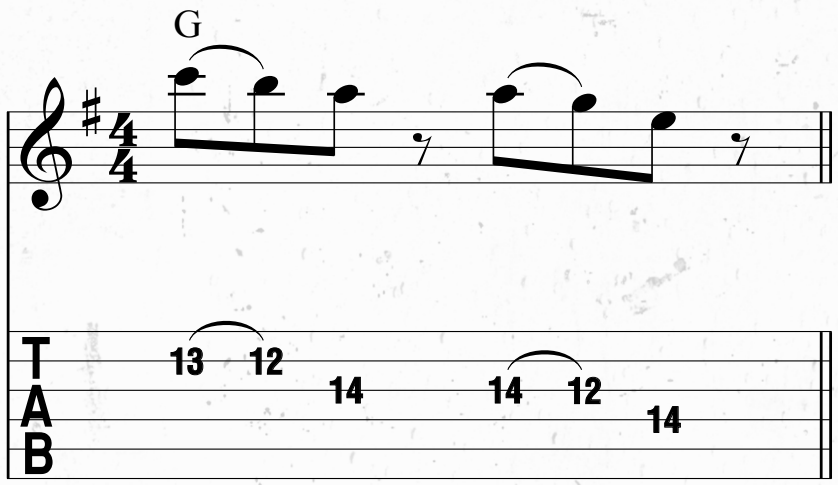


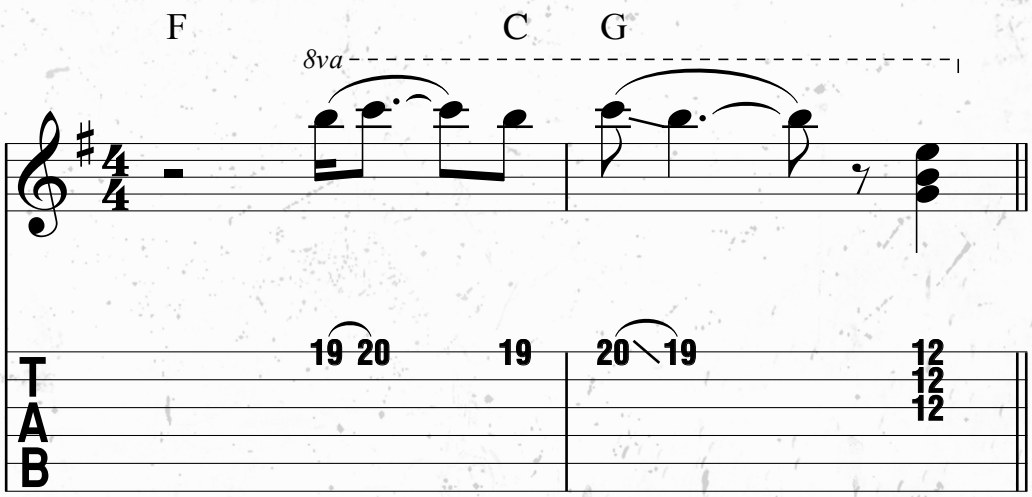
FIG. 2 contains the C major hexatonic scale in the more typical "box" fingering beloved by blues and rock guitarists for its finger-friendly arrangement. As readers of *Guitar Tricks Insider* know, it allows for the cool bends, pull-offs, and triplets near and dear to our hearts. **Performance Tip:** Observe how the "box" looks like a variation on the root "box" position of the A Aeolian mode. Hence, when improvising in it, be aware of the root (C) on strings 6 and 1 at fret 8, and string 4 at fret 10, while avoiding too much emphasis on the A notes except when going for the desired effect of the "sweet 6th."

FIG. 3



The tune which confirmed Dickey's status as a "Rock Guitar Hero" out from under Duane's lengthy shadow was the seemingly autobiographical one about the "man who rambled." **FIG. 3** features a short, typical G major hexatonic phrase, which in accepted blues-rock soloing fashion, starts with tension courtesy of the critical 4th (C) while ending on the E as the "sweet spot" alluded to in **FIG. 2**. **Performance Tip:** Pull off from the C to the B with the middle and index fingers so you land on the A with the ring finger. Then pull off from the A to the G with the ring and index fingers.

FIG. 4



Born on the same Greyhound bus as **FIG. 3**, **FIG. 4** squarely puts the focus on the interaction between the 3rd (B) and 4th (C) notes of the scale to create a memorable phrase with just two notes. In this case resolution is achieved with the triple-stop implying a G6 chord. **Performance Tip:** The most logical choice of fingering would be the index and middle fingers.

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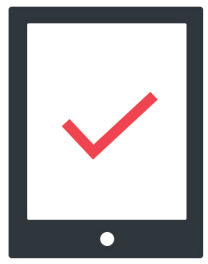

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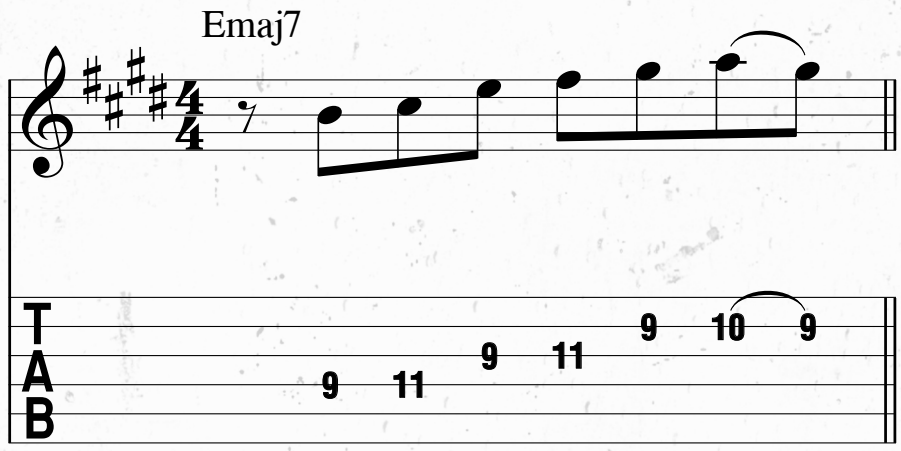
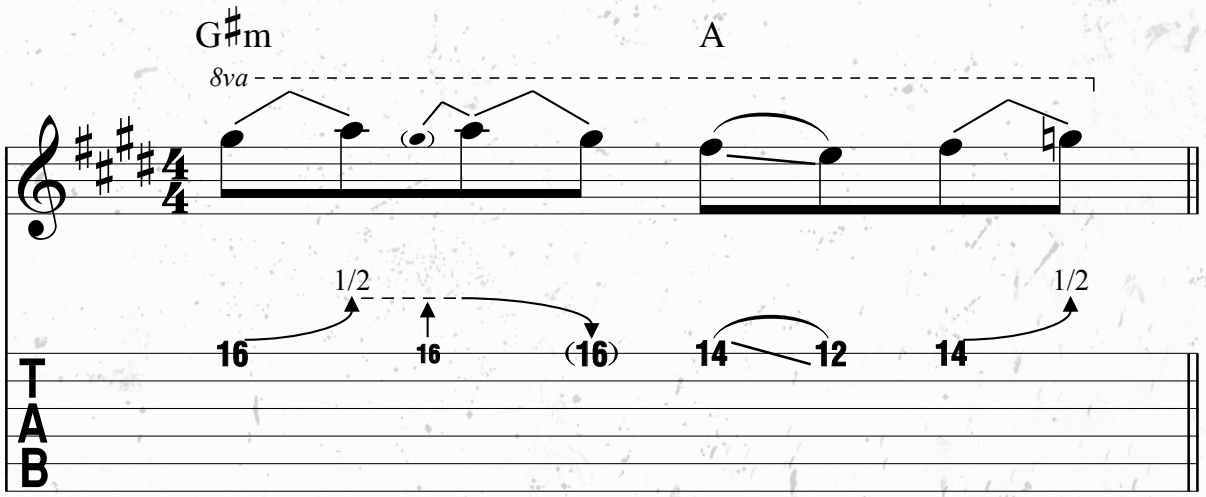
FIG. 5



A sweet lick for a "sweet girl" in **FIG. 5** could be seen as "Major Hexatonic Scale 101." It also shows how Dickey often loved to end a phrase on the mellifluous major 3rd (G#) to create gentle anticipation to the next measure.

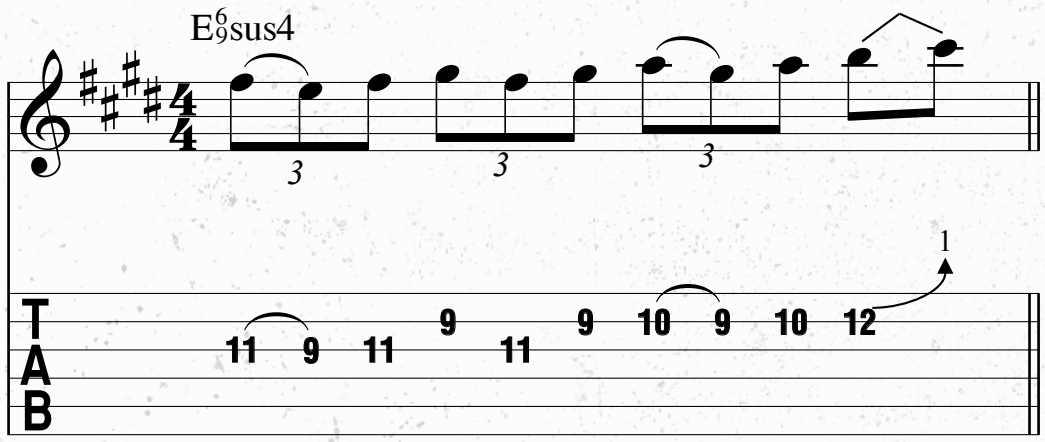
Again, the most significant component is the combination of the 3rd and 4th (A) on beat 4. **Performance Tip:** Index and ring and index and middle.

FIG. 6



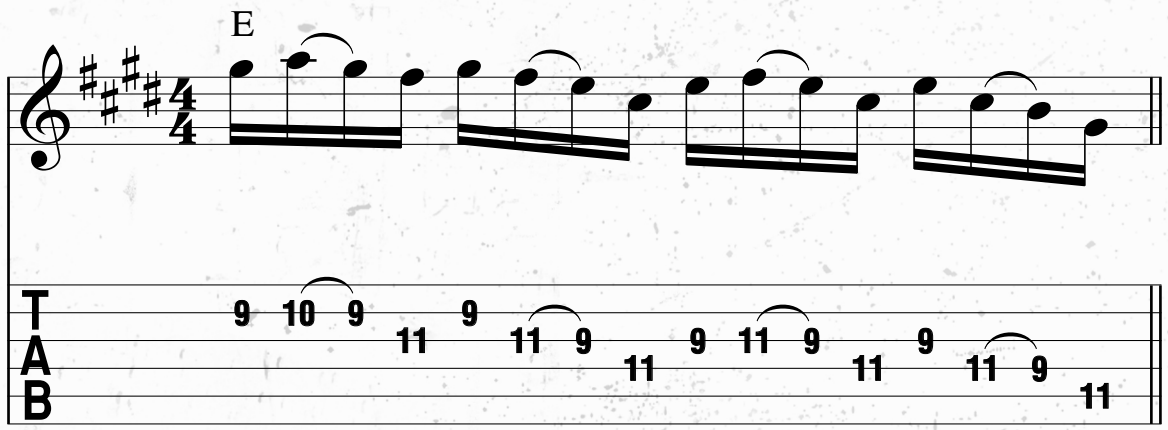
In **FIG. 6** Dickey bends the 3rd (G#) up a half-step to the 4th (A), letting the notes "sing" in the same paean to the "sweetie" acknowledged in **FIG. 5**. Observe how the last three notes of F#, E, and G natural (!) relate to the A chord change as the 6th, 5th, and b7th as he steps outside the hexatonic scale with a "blues note" for a tangy dose of true grit. **Performance Tip:** Bend the G# with the ring finger backed up by the middle and index fingers.

FIG. 7



Yet one more "sweet lick" is contained in **FIG. 7**. Phrases containing multiple triplets are another "trademark" Dickey maneuver and he employs them to great effect culminating in a climactic bend from the 5th (B) to the 6th (C#). **Performance Tip:** You *could* barre at fret 9 with your index finger to efficiently access the notes on beats 1 and 2. Pull off from the 4th (A) to the 3rd (G#) with the middle and ring fingers, as usual, and bend the B to C# with the ring finger backed up by the middle and index fingers.

FIG. 8



Inspired by favorable meteorological conditions in **FIG. 8**, Dickey penned one of his most iconic compositions as a tender love song from a "wild-eyed Southern boy." Check out those lyrical, rolling 16th notes. Smooth as sippin' whiskey! **Performance Tip:** Notice the continual repetition to the root (E) note for a tight, focused sound. ■

THE FIRST RECORD I EVER BOUGHT

by **Mike Mettler**

Every guitar player has to start somewhere. More often than not that somewhere is found within the grooves of the very first records bought with one's own money. These albums become the permanent talismans that are ingrained within the playing DNA – talismans that serve as the inspirational nuggets that ultimately help forge one's identity on the fretboard.

The first record I bought for myself was on my birthday in October, 1978: Billy Joel's *52nd Street*. I was totally enamored with the huge, muscular guitar riffs that propelled the album's electrifying opening track, "Big Shot." By scanning the album credits, I learned that all the mighty "Big Shot" riffage was courtesy of noted 70s studio-session guitarist Steve Khan. I would subsequently fumble along with the track on my cherry-red Sears 1244 acoustic guitar, trying to figure out the secrets of the song's mammoth power chords and massive solo. How did Khan do it? It would take me endless hours of practice to get somewhat even close to the level of his magical playing.

Needless to say, I was hooked. From there, I got a recurring summer job mowing lawns in my suburban Chicago neighborhood just so I could make enough pocket money to buy the albums of my guitar heroes, and try to learn everything I could from them. Each week I'd search for something new to obtain, emulate, and absorb – whether it was the adventurous dexterity of Yes's Steve Howe, the inventive arpeggios of Rush's Alex Lifeson, the creative angularity of The Police's Andy Summers, the slightly off-center pop and new-wave sensibilities of Fleetwood Mac's Lindsey Buckingham, or the explosive soloing prowess of Stevie Ray Vaughan – for starters.

And I'm not alone. Many big name guitarists also jumpstarted their playing styles from what they heard on the singles and albums bought in their youth. Here are the stories of three legendary players who found inspiration from the very first records they got their hands on.

Robbie Robertson by William Hames - Atlas Icons

ROBBIE ROBERTSON (THE BAND)

The first record I ever bought with my own money was *Here's Little Richard* (released 1957). I was addicted to his song "Rip It Up." It was the most amazing shuffle. It still is, to this day.

There was another favorite album of mine back then called *New Orleans: Home of the Blues* (released 1961). It contained a variety of New Orleans artists like Jessie Hill doing "Ooh Poo Pah Doo." I was also a big fan of Huey "Piano" Smith and His Clowns back then.

When I got this record it took me inside New Orleans music in a whole new way. I became a tremendous admirer of this music that rolled around out there, and have been ever since.

"Rip It Up" by Little Richard

Jorma Kaukonen Jefferson Airplane by Robert Knight

JORMA KAUKONEN

(JEFFERSON AIRPLANE, HOT TUNA)

As rock and roll and the pop thing were happening, the first record that made an impact on me was a 78 of Bill Haley's (and His Comets) "Rock Around the Clock." I was just a young teenager when that happened (in 1954).

The first record that I bought – gosh, my, my, my (pauses) – It could have been Buddy Holly. Then I started to buy some albums like the Chess series, *The Best of Muddy Waters* (released 1958), Howlin' Wolf, Sonny Boy Williamson – all those great cuts.

And I started to buy 45s, like we all did. Chuck Berry obviously made a huge impact on us from the guitar player point of view, because when you look at it, all of us who play the guitar think about all of those Chuck Berry licks that started to define our lives. But really they're just like vignettes – like B.B. King between verses – they're not wailing all the time like guitar players do today. But Chuck Berry – he was a folk poet of our time, talking about adolescent frustration. And we *loved* it.

I remember my father saying, "I don't want you playing any of that crap on my hi-fi. You'll *ruin* it." Well, when he went out of the house we would just crank it up on those Tannoy concentric speakers. And let me tell you – even in my memory still, all these many years later, it *rocked*.

"Rock Around the Clock" by Billy Haley and His Comets

JACK BRUCE (CREAM)

The first record I bought was *Golden Striker* (released 1957), by The MJQ, The Modern Jazz Quartet. When I was in college I saw them live and I went out and bought this EP. I tried to bring it in for my professors to listen to, but they didn't want to know about it.

I had gone to see The MJQ in concert in Glasgow (Scotland); and I found their bass player, Percy Heath, was very inspirational. I had also heard Ray Brown and Charles Mingus, of course. That's why I fell in love with the double bass. I wanted to play that way because at that time I also heard (famed Motown bassist) James Jamerson and I liked what he was doing; so I wanted to go for that whole melodic style. I used the jazz approach and applied it to bass guitar.

Mike Mettler writes the weekly Audiophile column for the Digital Trends website and is also the music editor of Sound & Vision. He interviews artists and producer about their love of music and its creation on his own site, The SoundBard

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Jack Bruce by Ken Settle

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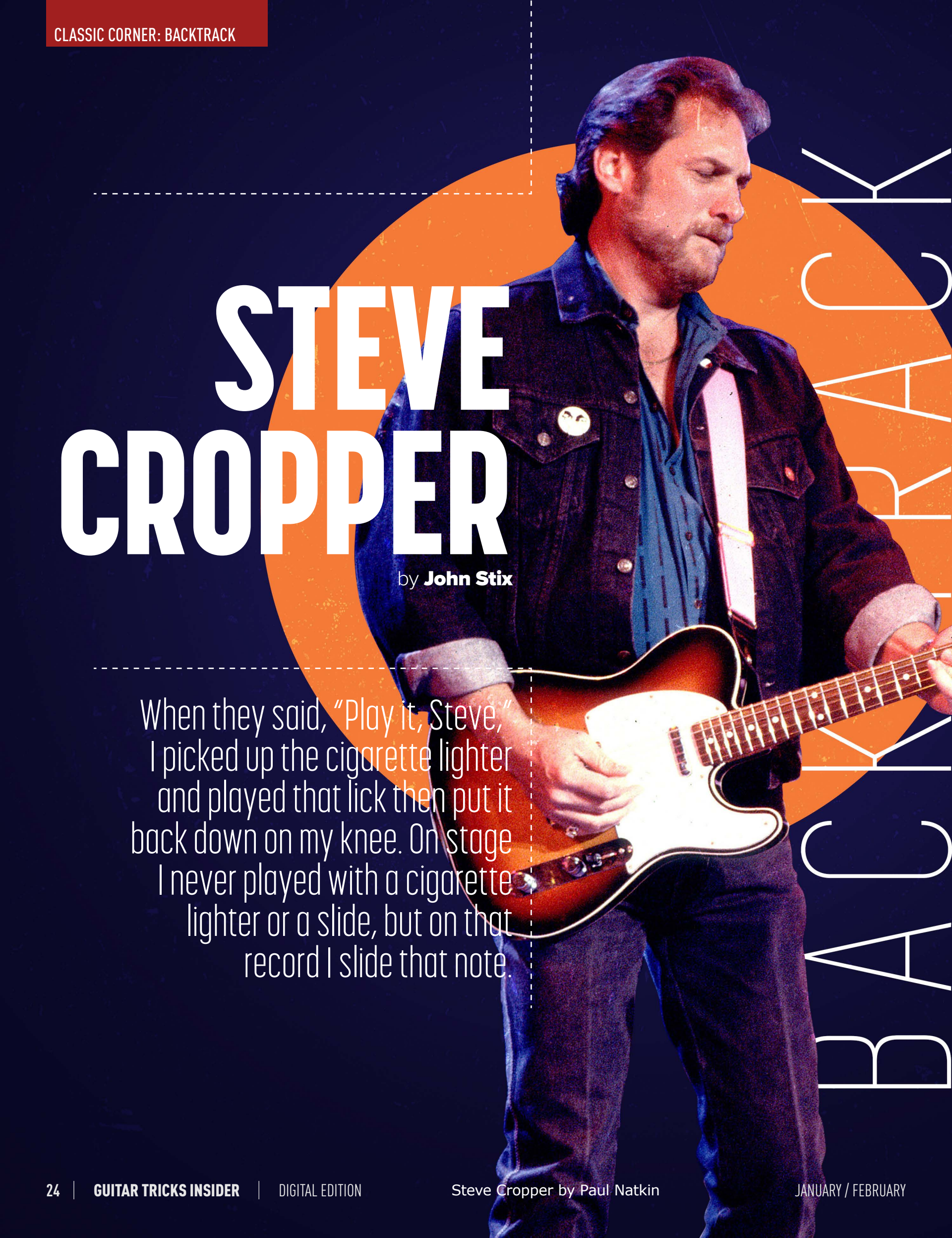
STEVE CROPPER

by **John Stix**

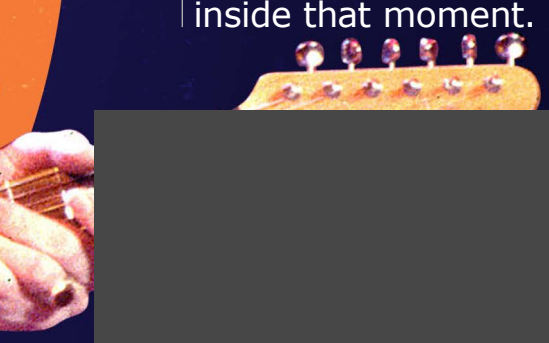


BACKTRACK

When they said, "Play it, Steve," I picked up the cigarette lighter and played that lick then put it back down on my knee. On stage I never played with a cigarette lighter or a slide, but on that record I slide that note.

Steve Cropper by Paul Natkin

In one of Bruce Springsteen's famous on-stage stories, he starts off by saying, "If you played in a bar on the Central Jersey shore in the 60s and 70s, you played soul music. Motown, Atlantic, Stax. Even the labels, whose very names, held a power and a mystery for us when we were young and getting going." Little did the young Boss know back then that some of the finest soul songs that came from the Stax label – songs like "Hold On I'm Coming," "In the Midnight Hour," and "Dock of the Bay" – were in fact created and played by a teenager who himself was still a young student of the guitar. Steve Cropper, master of the groove intro and the simple melodic hook was the guitar chair for the Stax house band, Booker T and the MG's. It's Steve on "Green Onions" and "Time is Tight." And most famously it's Steve Cropper who answers the call of Sam Moore to "Play it, Steve" on the immortal "Soul Man." In this edition of Back Track, Steve Cropper takes us inside that moment.



In "Soul Man" when they say "Play it, Steve," did you have that little lick ready and waiting?

There's a story about that lick and one on the intro. For that particular lick, I had my cigarette lighter on my knee and when they said, "Play it, Steve," I picked up the cigarette lighter and played that lick then put it back down on my knee. On stage I never played with a cigarette lighter or a slide, but on that record I slide that note. The "Play it, Steve" came in the last three takes when Sam put it in there. He may say he only said it once, but I know he did it at least the last two takes. It became a worked out situation as we worked on the song. With the intro, I was in the studio working on something else. Issac (Hayes) came in and said, "Can I borrow you for a minute? Get your guitar because we have a great song for the Sam & Dave session tomorrow but I can't get an intro going!" In those days we were very intro conscious.

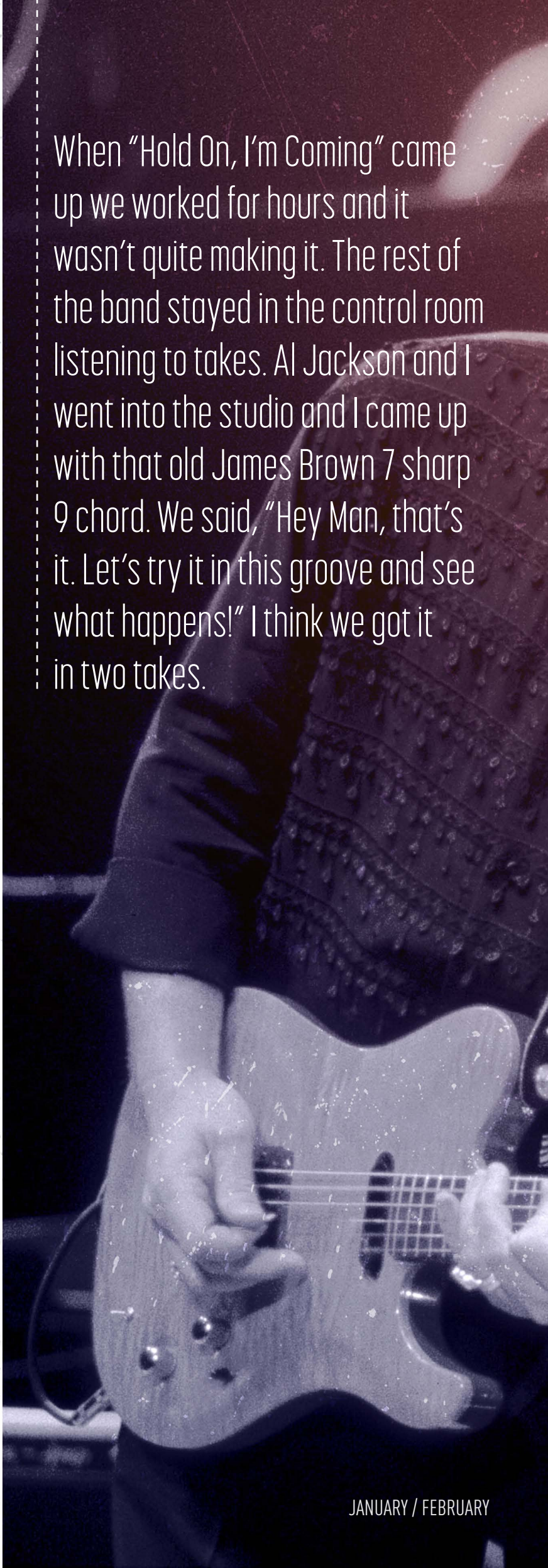
"Soul Man" by Sam & Dave

We wanted something that would get people out of their seats dancing right away without having the singer singing or talking. He said, "See if you can work out something on these changes." The changes by themselves, if you take the melody of the guitar off, are block chords. We worked for half an hour and came up with that intro. When we presented it to the band the next day we were ready. The main chord riff I had used before. I don't recall what songs. That whole style of rhythm is sort of derivative of a thing that Ike Turner had done many years before. I played it one day and everybody said it was great. I think it all started because I had this rhythm pattern on "You Don't Know Like I Know," and everybody liked that. When "Hold On, I'm Coming" came up, we worked for hours and it wasn't quite making it. We knew it was a good song and I was frustrated. Issac and Dave threw their hands up. They knew they had a great song but it wasn't going on. Al Jackson looked at me and said, "Come on, Cropper, let's go get this song." The rest of the band stayed in the control room listening to takes. Al Jackson and I went into the studio and I came up with that old James Brown 7 sharp 9 chord. We said, "Hey Man, that's it. Let's try it in this groove and see what happens!" I think we got it in two takes. It became a style in most of the Sam & Dave songs to have a dominant guitar rhythm going on. We were conscious of that.

On the Booker T songs it's more of a feel than a solo. Did you not want to solo or did you feel the songs didn't need them?

It's funny you put it that way. I still look at them as solos. A solo is something that is a venture away from the melody and was usually set in a slightly different groove than the rest of the song. With my style of playing I never did like elongated solos anyway. I didn't get off doing them. It sort of bored me if I had to play more than 16 bars. Eight bars was fine. 16 bars is way plenty. On record, because we kept things short, it was usually an eight-bar solo. On stage, we'd usually extend it and I'd play one more. So I'd do two solos back-to-back. I think my solo style developed out of the fact that I never practiced soloing. I wasn't very fast. I took a few lessons when I was young. I mainly took lessons to learn chord changes so I could learn band charts. I didn't learn jazz. I developed this amateurish style of playing that seemed to be successful. ■

When "Hold On, I'm Coming" came up we worked for hours and it wasn't quite making it. The rest of the band stayed in the control room listening to takes. Al Jackson and I went into the studio and I came up with that old James Brown 7 sharp 9 chord. We said, "Hey Man, that's it. Let's try it in this groove and see what happens!" I think we got it in two takes.



Steve Cropper and Dave Edmunds by Paul Natkin

"Hold On I'm Coming" by Sam & Dave

“We’ve kept it simple. We never really got too progressive or too hard to digest. Sometimes in a song, we would make the best out of three chords.”

- Frank Hannon

TESLA

OPEN MINDS, CLEAR HEARTS... CAN ROCK

by **David Farinella**

Tesla Frank Hannon by Ken Settle

Tesla made its bones playing a gritty brand of powerhouse, blues-laced rock and roll inspired by classic rock legends such as Led Zeppelin, The Rolling Stones, The Beatles, Aerosmith, and Peter Frampton.

What helped this quintet from Sacramento, California stand out was that they insisted on staying true to those roots, while their late-80s to early-90s brethren leaned toward the right moves. In the heyday of MTV, Tesla had the music more than the look. And that was enough.

The band's platinum debut, *Mechanical Resonance*, came out 30 years ago and boasted two of the band's most beloved songs: "Modern Day Cowboy" and "Little Suzi."

Tesla released three more platinum albums including the then ground-breaking acoustic *Five Man Acoustical Jam* and enjoyed radio popularity for the songs "Love Song," "Edison's Medicine," and "What You Give."

Part of what propelled the band – which consisted of singer Jeff Keith, guitarists Frank Hannon and Tommy Skeoch, drummer Troy Luccketta, and bassist Brian Wheat – was the twin guitar attack of Hannon and Skeoch (who left the band in 2005 and was replaced by Dave Rude).

"We've kept it simple," Hannon says of the band's music. "We never really got too progressive or too hard to digest. Sometimes in a song we would make the best out of three chords."

It's a philosophy that was born from Hannon's love of classic rock and his first exposure to learning to play guitar. "When I was a kid my Mom married into a big Mexican family, and there were always parties

going on," he recalls. "There was an older kid in the family, my step-cousin that played guitar a little bit. I got fascinated by it and started playing with him."

Hannon loved it right away. "I discovered early on that music came easy to me – a lot easier than playing basketball or football," He says with a laugh. "By the time I was in junior high school, we had learned a bunch of songs by listening to records. We'd take the needle and put it back on the song over and over again to (learn) the song by ear."

From there he started playing with older kids at a music store a couple blocks from the house. "By the time I was 14 or 15 I was whizzing away. That's when I got discovered by Brian (Wheat). He and I went through a bunch of different guys until it became Tesla."

The trick to staying interested 40 years on, Hannon says, is staying open minded.

"Don't get stuck in one genre. If you love what's popular today, that's cool and great, but the sound of it can tend to be really processed with a lot of effects and delay. My advice would be to open your mind and go back and listen to B.B. King and players that can play one or two notes, and bend those notes to make them sound killer with no distortion."

"It's not a matter of learning everything," he adds. "Learn a bunch of little things. You don't have to beat yourself up and try to learn every single little thing. Just learn one or two little licks that you like, master those, and put those in your pocket."

As an example, Hannon points to an internet video binge he recently went on.

"I just watched a video of Merle Travis (a country singer/songwriter most popular in the mid-40s) and his son Tom Bresh. There are some great guitar licks. Then I'll go watch

"Love Song" by Tesla

Tesla Frank Hannon by Larry Marano - Atlas Icons

videos of Iron Maiden or Jimi Hendrix. I'll go through a phase where I'm into the Grateful Dead or Godsmack. It's about having an open mind to all kinds of different genres, learn pieces of it, and keep it fun."

Dave Rude has a similar story.

"About to two or three years ago I got psychotically into Joe Bonamassa, who before that I had never really been into. I appreciated him but it didn't hit me. But man, one day someone turned on a light switch and I was like, 'Oh my God.' I got every record and every DVD, and then bought an instructional 'How to Play Like Joe Bonamassa' book and learned some of the licks," he continues. "It was cool because it's the same sort of style and basic genre that I already play, but it was an entirely different approach and a couple of different patterns."

That's part of the reason Hannon and Rude have such great chemistry while writing and playing live.

Hannon explains, "One guy says, 'Hey man, I got this riff. Tell me what you think.' Then the other person will tag along and say, 'Hey, I got something to go with that.' You can make those two counterparts work together – one guy plays low on the neck, one guy plays high. You just have to have an open mind to try different things."

That started for Hannon back when Skeoch was in the band. "Even though personality-wise we were very different, when it came to playing guitar we both had open minds and we would appreciate each other's ideas and not get stuck," he says. "Don't get married to your idea. Once you do that, you screw yourself. You have to have an open mind and you have to jam."

That's how great bands like The Allman Brothers Band did it, he points out.

"Dickey Betts and Duane Allman would jam in a room, and next thing you know the ideas start flying and magic happens."

Learning new stuff and playing together still happens, Rude says. "A few minutes ago Frank was in the back (of the bus) playing guitar, jamming on some weird set of jazz chords. I do the same thing. I'll get bored and want to try something different. It's not like we're going to play in a jazz trio or something, but just learning a couple of different chords or a song that you normally wouldn't do opens up your mind so much," he continues. "It's more of a mental and spiritual thing at that point, where it guides you to different places and makes you think about songs in different ways."

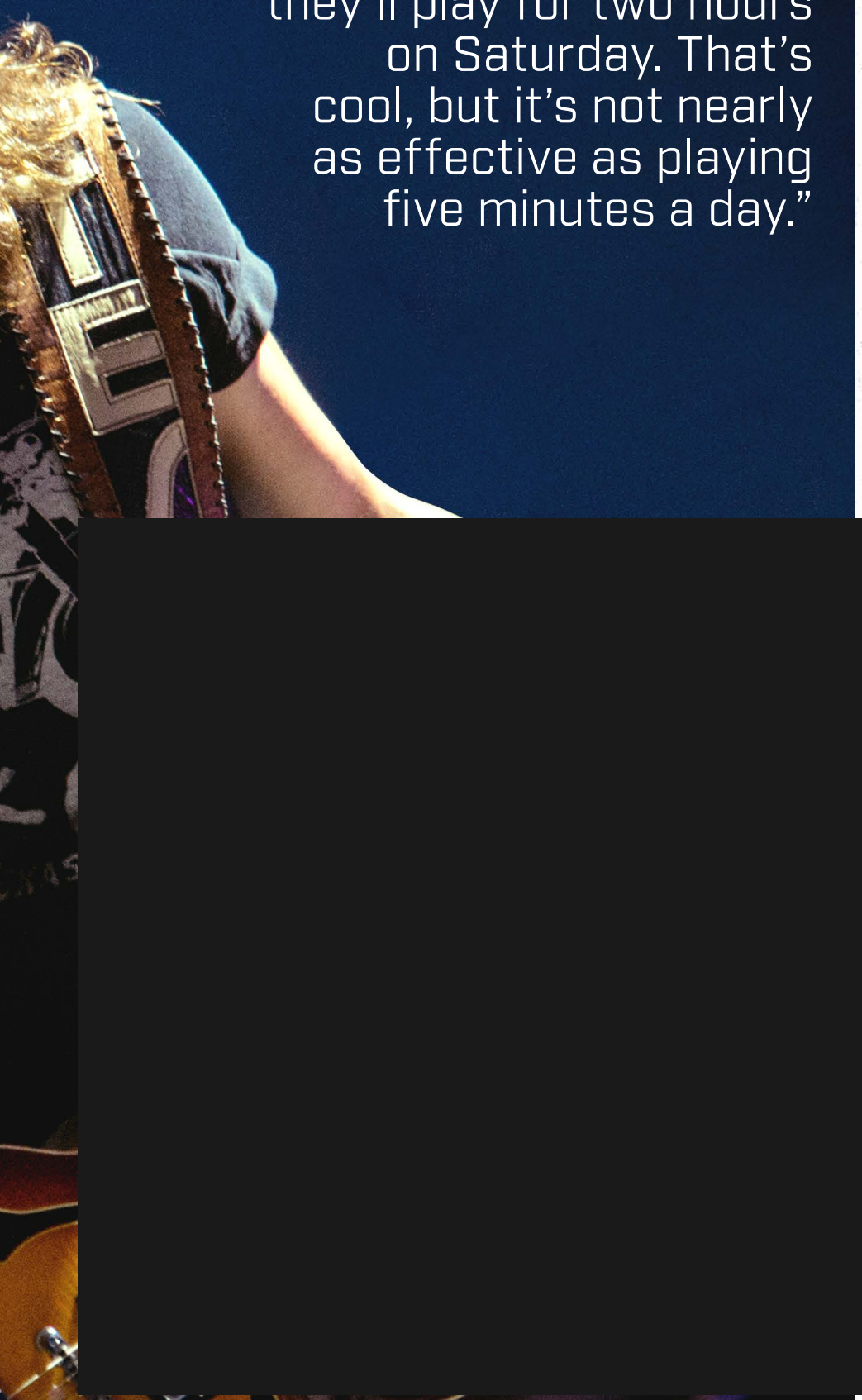
And it's inspired the band while working on a new collection of songs with Def Leppard guitarist Phil Collen. "Save That Goodness," the first to be released, blends the best of Tesla's acoustic and rock roots with a gospel singer.

"It reminds me of 'Little Suzi' or 'Gettin' Better' – A positive message that's like the early days with a gospel singer who sounds like Aretha Franklin. She's amazing."

Rude believes that growth as a player comes by dedicating a little time to the instrument every day. It's something he practices and suggests to the students he still teaches when not touring.

"Sometimes older students are working or have a wife or kids – regular life stuff that they have to do – and guitar is a hobby. So they won't do five minutes a day, but they'll play for two hours on Saturday. That's cool, but it's not nearly as effective as playing for five minutes a day. Like, before you go to bed, practice going from a D to a G ten times.

TESLA Dave Rude by Igor Vidyashev - Atlas Icons



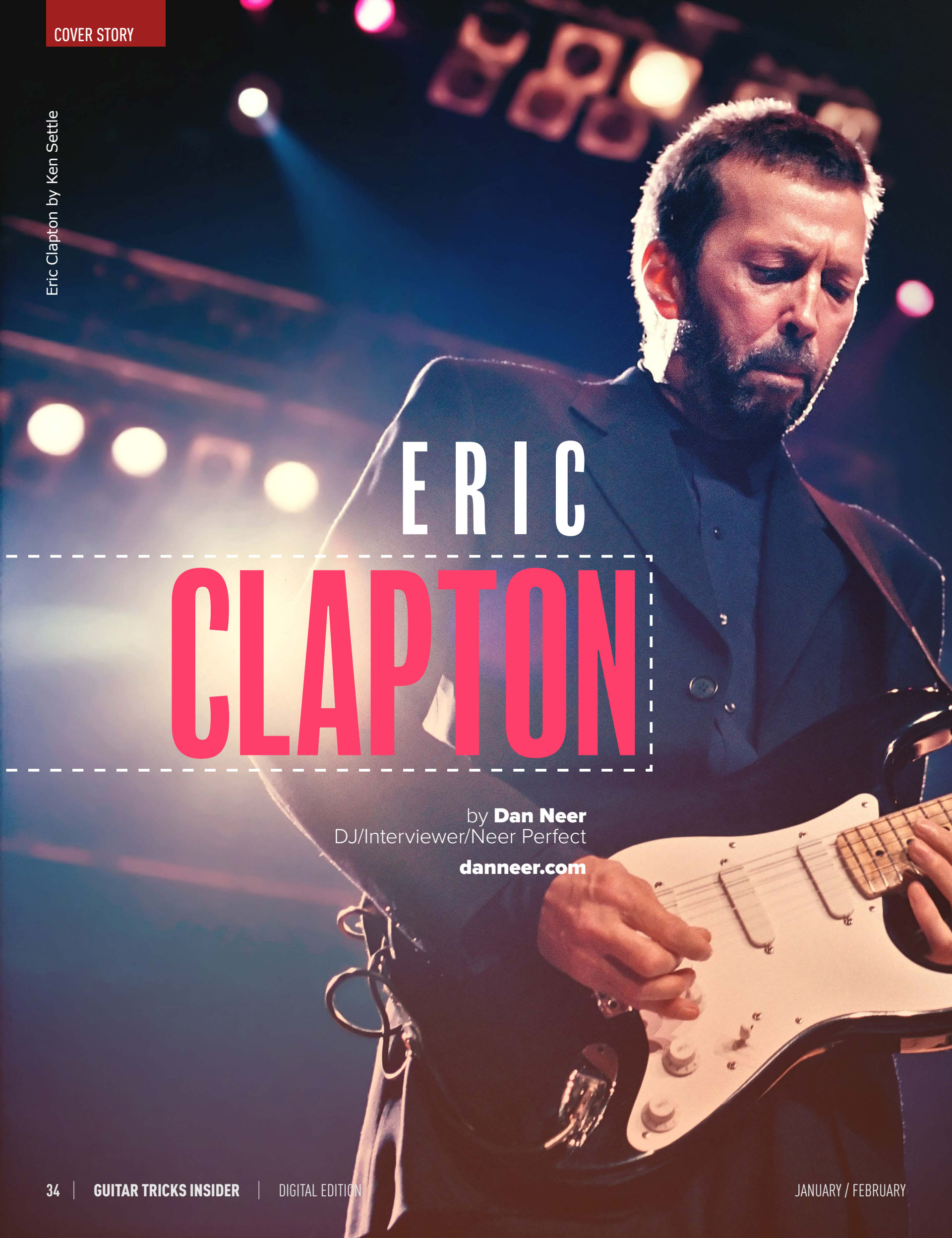
"Sometimes older students have regular life stuff to do and guitar is a hobby. So they won't do five minutes a day, but they'll play for two hours on Saturday. That's cool, but it's not nearly as effective as playing five minutes a day."

"My biggest thing is just keep playing," he continues. "Play ten minutes a day. I think anyone can fit in stupidly small amounts of time."

With that, Hannon and Rude are off. There's a bit of time before they're due to hit the stage – maybe a few minutes to jam out some ideas or to just play together. Whatever it is, Hannon's goal is to avoid a common pitfall he sees.

"The biggest obstacle I see with musicians or anybody is that they get hung up. With anything you do, you have to adapt, have fun, and not get hung up." ■

"Modern Day Cowboy" by Tesla



Eric Clapton by Ken Settle

ERIC CLAPTON

by **Dan Neer**
DJ/Interviewer/Neer Perfect
danneer.com

> "Sunshine" was written because Jack and I went to see Jimi Hendrix. Jack was so floored that he wrote this riff for Jimi. It was a tribute to Jimi and the way he played.

first met Eric Clapton a few days before his birthday in late March, 1985 in Dallas, Texas. He was rehearsing with his band getting ready to do a tour for his *Behind the Sun* album. For three days we would get together for a couple hours and talk over tea. He was charming, warm, funny, and brutally honest. Over the next couple of decades, we would do another seven interviews. I find him to be simply one of the best guitarists ever and a fierce supporter of the blues, which has inspired him to say, "carry the torch and pass it on."

I'd like you to comment on some of the songs you were playing with Cream.

In that time the band was young enough to be influenced. "Sunshine of Your Love" was done before we'd become really famous. That was written because Jack and I went to see Jimi Hendrix. Jack was so floored by Jimi Hendrix that he wrote this riff for Jimi. It was a tribute to Jimi and the way he played. That riff was just for him. So we did that song kind of thinking of Jimi

"Sunshine of Your Love" by Cream

and he picked up on it, too. I mean he realized that. But when we got more famous that became impossible. We became so wrapped up in our own ideology that to be influenced by someone outside was almost impossible.

When was the first time you could stretch out on the guitar?

Because of our ready-made following we could do that any time. The more guitar playing you gave them the better they liked it. And to begin with, we didn't have a full set. We had maybe three quarters of an hour's material. And when it became clear that we needed more than that, we just stretched the numbers out and then that became vogue! It was purely accidental.

What about "Badge"?

That was sort of a mix up. I think it was written between myself, George Harrison, and Ringo Starr, where we all just threw lines in and were

"Key to the Highway" by Allman Brothers with Eric Clapton

JANUARY / FEBRUARY

Eric Clapton by Baron Wolman

taking different substances and fooling around. Then I ran across a man in California who'd developed a pedal which you play into a Leslie and you'd press a button and your guitar would become an organ.

Wasn't the song actually called Bridge?

Yeah. We were writing down the lyrics at George's house as Ringo and I were shouting them out. George was writing them down. It said "Badge" but what it meant was actually the bridge. I said that's a good name for a song and it stuck.

You did eventually get to team up with Steve Winwood.

After Cream folded I found Stevie. He was living in a cottage out in Berkshire and we used to sit and play. There was a feeling that obviously we would do something but there was no rush. Then Ginger came along and he wanted to get going sooner than we did, but we went along with it anyway and made Blind Faith. We formed the band, which was really much too much of a rush job. We had no time to evaluate what we were going to do and what kind of thing we all had in common. And when it came down to it, we didn't have enough in common to stay together as a band. There was a great deal of restraint that had to be employed because we were treading on one another's toes. I was in awe of Steve and respectful of his space and this made me rein in a lot more than I'd ever done before and I felt myself constricted. And because we were blown up and hyped so much, that was uncomfortable, too. Everyone was paranoid and nervous when we played Madison Square Garden. We did the biggest gigs and were terrified all the time. Of course, Delaney and Bonnie were on the bill and in contrast, they were having the best time in the world. There was no pressure on them. They went on

and played their set and had a fantastic time. We went on, shaking and white, and had a dreadful time. I started to yearn for the happy-go-luckiness that they had. I started hanging around with them and immediately clicked with Delaney. The next thing I knew they were where I wanted to be.

And that's where you went.

At the end of the tour I went off and stayed with Delaney and Bonnie. Then I brought them to England to do a tour and I was the guest star in that band. I got one song and played all the solos. I was writing with Delaney with the idea of a solo album of my own, which he was constantly nagging me about 'cause he said I should give the public what they want. Delaney was very important to me. He got me to sing and take it seriously. He taught me it was actually possible to enjoy it, as well. I always thought that someone could do it better than me and that I was strictly a guitarist. In that sense I still function that way. I still see singing as being necessary to the object of what I'm doing; but it's not something I work on very much. I'm too lazy. I tend to channel all my creative energy into playing the guitar.

How did Derek get his Dominoes?

I stole them. I joined up with that outfit as a guest artist and became an onlooker as to how bands carry on behind the leader. Basically they all wanted more money and it was going to be a strike situation if they didn't get a raise. They tentatively asked Delaney if they could have more money and he said, "No. You're fired." He fired the whole lot. By this time I had made the solo album with all of these guys and they had started to feel quite confident about being a leader. I thought, "I'll take the rhythm section and form my own band." I went back to England and took Jim Gordon, Carl Radle, and

"While My Guitar Gently Weeps" by Harrison and Clapton in Japan 1992

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Bob Whitlock. We formed Derek and the Dominoes without actually knowing what we were gonna do. It was supposed to be Del and the Dominoes, but it sort of got reshuffled.

Why did you work so well with Duane Allman?

We both thought the same way and had the same likes and dislikes. We both liked Robert Johnson and Elmore James. All of the people who formed his style of playing were part of forming mine. When you get two people like that in the studio, you're really listening to one musician some of the time and the other one is standing off. Then he steps in and it's just like very kindred.

Was *Layla* intended to be a double album?

No. Originally it was a single album and we just couldn't stop. After we met Duane, we could have made another couple of double albums. We should have. There was a core of the album which we intended to make, which was going to be the songs that we'd written. We got to a stage where we were enjoying ourselves and Duane was there. We were overdubbing guitar and we'd stop and write or say let's do "Key to the Highway" or "Nobody Knows You When You're Down and Out". It was all so good we couldn't keep it off the record.

Did it bother you that *Layla* never really took off when it first came out?

It took off about a year after it was out. It was funny because we were touring at that time around Europe and England as Derek and the Dominoes, and I quite enjoyed the experience of going to a town, setting up in a club, and starting to play – with people wandering in not knowing who you were. You're probably aware that I had been fighting personality success for quite a while and this was the perfect

Eric Clapton by Ken Settle

answer – to be totally anonymous in a great band and to see if people liked it for what it was itself.

How did you come to play on "While My Guitar Gently Weeps"?

George and I had met when I was with The Yardbirds and a couple of times since then. I got to see him a lot when he moved down to Surrey, which is where I'm from. I was living in London and used to drop by a lot at the flat. He got me in to do the Jackie Lomax sessions and I think he was having trouble with "While My Guitar Gently Weeps" because John and Paul were reticent about George and Ring's proficiency. I think this was his way of saying well Eric likes it, so it must be alright.

What about *Live Peace in Toronto*?

I only appeared with John and Yoko. That was very strong. We rehearsed on the plane. But we were enthusiastic about it and to be working with John was great, so we had to be at our best. I haven't heard that record for a while. From recollection the idea was that being with John you didn't just play it straight. You exaggerated. A lot of the way he approached his music was almost as a send up of what the form of the music was. For instance, "Yer Blues" was a send up of the blues. So it was a parody. If I was given a solo I had to parody that solo and exaggerate it, elongate it, and make it gross in some ways. Working with John was great. It was very inspiring. But he also gave off a great feeling of insecurity in himself. He seems to do this with the intent to make you feel more confident. It was his way of saying, "Look, I'm no good so you're great." It made you feel very secure and sure of yourself. ■

The Randy Rhoads story has been told many times before. But never like this. Never has a book on him included historic audio of Randy Speaking. You can read and listen as Randy's own voice provides a diary of his life – as a teacher, a founding member of Quiet Riot, and a reluctant rock star with Ozzy Osbourne.

Guitar Chat: Randy Rhoads was produced with the cooperation and support of the Rhoads family. We were given rare access to family photos and new, insightful interviews with Randy's brother, Kelly, and sister, Kathy. Other participants include Randy's mom and band members of Quiet Riot and Ozzy Osbourne.

This project was over three years in the making and we hope you enjoy this excerpt.
To check out more, **click here for the iBook**.

THE AUDITION

This bass player (Dana Strum) knew of Randy, had heard him, and recommended that Ozzy hear him, because he was ready to go back to England and give up. They called Randy in the morning and he said, 'I'm not interested. I like my band and I don't want to make a change.' I didn't know Ozzy Osbourne. I wasn't into rock that much. Randy explained that he had been with Black Sabbath for many years. I said, 'You know Randy, in the music business it really is important to know people. Sometimes if you just know somebody it's a good thing. Why don't you just go down and meet him and just talk with him if nothing else.' Well he didn't know. So they called again and asked if he would come down. He said, 'I have to teach at my mother's school. We don't get home until late and by the time I get there it will be

LISTEN HEAR

Dolores Rhoads

Randy Rhoads

Randy Rhoads by Neil Zlozower - Atlas Icons

midnight or 1:00 A.M.' They said, 'That's alright. Come whenever you get through, but just come.' He still didn't want to go. I said, 'Randy it can't hurt, just go and see what it's all about.' So he did. He took his little old Fender practice amp, which he loved. He wasn't gone all that long. When he came back I asked, 'What happened?' He said, 'I don't know what happened. I was just warming up, tuning up, and Ozzy came out and said, 'You've got the job.' I don't know what job I got, but he says I got it.' Randy said, 'It's just one of those things. It probably won't amount to anything because Ozzy has to go back to England. Ozzy said he would call me in two weeks, but you know how these things are in music. You take it with a grain of salt.' Ozzy did call in exactly two weeks. ***—Delores Rhoads***

He didn't tell me about the audition. He said, 'You'll never guess who I'm playing with. Ozzy Osbourne.' I said, 'What are you going to do with him?' He said, 'I don't know yet, but at least it's some kind of an opportunity. He has money and stuff. I'll see where it goes.' Then he started to see it was going to go somewhere. It was on a different level than Quiet Riot. Even though we had our local following and albums out in Japan, we didn't have a pot to piss in. ***—Kelly Garni***

He figured that Ozzy was a flake and nothing would come of it. Then, after a particularly bad rehearsal, he got called again and went down to some recording studio. I think it was in Malibu. He played through a Fender Princeton amp and the next day he told me he got the gig. To be honest, he waited for two months to hear from Ozzy. He got the call just before Thanksgiving and went off to England. ***—Kevin DuBrow***

He didn't like the Black Sabbath stuff at all. In fact, even though after he got the gig, my mom is the one who made him go. He goes 'I don't want to be in a band with that Black Sabbath guy.' My mom said, 'This is your break, you're going.' ***—Kelle Rhoads***

At the time I auditioned Randy Rhoads, I had gone through at least 50 guitar players. They come along and play every lick in the world. I was drunk as a fool when I met Randy Rhoads but I knew. I could search this town forever and a day and fall over the guy on my doorstep. ***—Ozzy Osbourne***

If you've got looks and attitude the rest will follow. If you're a crap guitar player it was 'get on your bike man don't waste my time.' But Randy had a style and you don't have to sit there for three hours of auditioning to realize a man's got class and style. That man was one of the classiest human individuals I ever had the privilege to meet. Thank God I met him. What a terrible loss to the musical world that he died. ***—Ozzy Osbourne***

LISTEN HEAR

LISTEN HEAR
RANDY RHOADS

You know the story that Randy went down and he plugged this little practice amp in, and he was just warming up and doing arpeggios and Ozzy said, 'You've got the gig.' The deal is Ozzy wanted to make sure that Randy could play with a band. He already could see that Randy was incredibly talented. But he wanted to make sure Randy would be able to play with other musicians and with him singing. So they scheduled like an audition with Dana Strum playing bass and Frankie Banali playing drums and Ozzy singing and Randy playing guitar. So they did an audition at SIR or something like that and that sealed the deal. Here's something that you don't know. Jet Records opposed using Randy. They said, 'We don't want to use a Yank if we don't need to. Let's make it all Brits.' Remember, Bob Daisley was already in the band. And Ozzy vigorously said, 'I want Randy Rhoads. I want him in my band. He is my lead player.' And Jet Records said, 'Can't you get another British guy? It would make it so much easier.' Ozzy said vigorously, 'I'm holding out for this Randy Rhoads guy.' And the funny thing is, Bob Daisley thought since Randy was a guitar teacher, he thought Randy was going to arrive wearing a cardigan sweater, wearing glasses and smoking a pipe. He was trying to envision it. How is a music teacher going to fit into this band? Once they started playing together it was clear right from the very beginning. Ozzy and Randy: they had a chemistry. ***—Kelle Rhoads*** ■

Kelle Rhoads

"THE GREATEST MUSIC OF ALL COMES FROM THE BLUES- SPIRITUALS, ROCK, COUNTRY & WESTERN. EVERYTHING COMES FROM THAT ROOT."

JOHN LEE HOOKER

by **Bruce Pollock**

H

John Lee Hooker by Ken Settle

If, as the saying goes, "The blues had a baby and they called it rock and roll," then John Lee Hooker was lucky he was never slapped with a massive paternity suit. Bands like the Rolling Stones, Z.Z. Top, and J. Geils all looked up to Hooker as a musical father figure at some point in their careers. The Animals had a major hit with his tune "Boom Boom," while Canned Heat, George Thorogood, and the Blues Brothers all borrowed generously from his sizzling guitar style. John Lee Hooker continued to burn his boogie across the stages of America and Europe until his death in 2001 at the age of 83. In the 90s he even fulfilled one of his fondest goals by recording some personal favorites,

"I Cover the Waterfront" on 1991's *Mr. Lucky* (in a duet with Van Morrison), and the Brook Benton classic "Kiddio" on 1995's *Chill Out*. In '89 and '91, some of rock's best blues singers and players paid tribute to Hooker, recording duets with the great man on *The Healer* (Bonnie Raitt, Carlos Santana, Los Lobos, Canned Heat) and *Mr. Lucky* (Albert Collins, John Hammond Jr., Keith Richards, Johnny Winter, and Ry Cooder).

"I'm doing the same thing as I used to, but it's more modern," Hooker told me in 1985. "I'm playing the same basic beat, but I build different instruments around it. I can do lots of different styles if I want to. I can play ballads, country and western, but I don't do it. If I start to do that I would lose my blues audience. I would lose my fans. They know me from playing the blues and the boogie. When I sit at home I can play beautiful ballads like 'I Cover the Waterfront.' I can do Brook Benton's style really good. I like 'A Rainy Night in Georgia.' I love 'I Left My Heart in San

"Boom Boom" by John Lee Hooker

Francisco.' When I heard that song I couldn't help it. I said I gotta do it as a blues. So I wrote 'Frisco.' I love Tony Bennett. I just love his voice. I want to meet him so bad."

As far as I can tell, however, he never did get to record that classic blues album he dreamed of. Although at least one or two classics of the genre appear on all of his albums, as well as the tunes he turned into blues classics with his fingers.

"There are certain types of songs that fit my music just like that. I turn it around and it becomes mine. You can write something for me and I may love it, but I've still got to change it to where it fits me. I listen to the radio all the time and I pick up on new things. A lot of blues artists inspire me. Some of the old blues songs are so good, and so sweet, and so mellow I'd like to do a whole album of them. My mind's made up to do it but I haven't done it yet. I could sing 'Hoochie Coochie Man.' I wouldn't do it like Muddy did it. I do a lot of Howlin' Wolf's stuff. It's like that song by Otis Spann, 'Don't Let the Blues Die.'

Clearly, the blues informed every one of his songs and interpretations. "The blues come from way back when the world was born, the blues was born. As the world progressed the blues got more fancy and more modern. They dressed it up much more. They got lyrics now that they didn't have then. But they're still saying the same thing. The greatest music of all comes from the blues-spirituals, rock, country & western. Everything comes from that root. When the blues first came out it was only among black people. We used to sing them in the cotton fields, on the farms. They didn't care about lyrics. They whistled the blues, hummed the blues, moaned the blues. They didn't have set words-they didn't rhyme. But you have to roll with the times."

Ironically as a songwriter, Hooker claimed he found it very difficult to work when he actually had the blues. "A lot of people think blues singers write when they're sad and lonely. They think you gotta be down and out to write the

John Lee Hooker by Paul Natkin

blues-hungry, broke. It's not true. I write when I've got a good feeling – when I'm happy. When things are going well for you, you write. You have to be in the groove to write. You can't be upset and worried and write the blues. You've got to have a clear mind. The songs are sad, and they think you're sad when you're writing them, but you're not. You're just in a good mood for writing blues. When you write like that you're not writing for yourself. There are millions of people out there. Maybe some of them are sad, and when they hear the words you said, the song will hit them. Goddamn, my old lady just left me. Anyone in the world who's been in that position will buy it. I'm not feeling that way, but I'm writing it for the people who are. Sometimes you feel something deep down and write it to get it out – get it off your chest. But I cannot write a song when I'm feeling blue. I can't think when my mind is on my troubles.

"Some songs are much harder to write than others. It just depends on what type of a song it is. On some you get it down right away. Ballads are a little bit harder. You have to go over some of the lines to get them right. If I get an idea I'll think about it and get it together and then I'll pick up a guitar and phrase it. I'll play it once to get the sound, the feeling, the beat. Then I'll get the band I'm playing with and work on it in the studio. If I wake up in the middle of the night with a good idea I'll start talking into the tape recorder. I have one right by my bed. Sometimes I'll take it with me in my car. Before tape recorders I just had to keep it all in my head."

As it always has, inspiration comes in the strangest of places. Hooker told me the story of how one of his greatest hits, "Boom Boom," was made into a rocker by the Animals.

"I used to play at this place called the Apex Bar in Detroit. There was a young lady there named Luilla. She was a bartender there. I would come in there at night and I'd never be on time. Every night the band would beat me there. Sometimes they'd be on the bandstand playing

"Serves Me Right to Suffer" by John Lee Hooker

by the time I got there. I'd always be late and whenever I'd come in she'd point at me and say, 'Boom boom, you're late again.' She kept saying that. It dawned on me that that was a good name for a song. Then one night she said, 'Boom boom, I'm gonna shoot you down.' She gave me a song but she didn't know it.

"I took that thing and I hummed it all the way home from the bar. At night I went to bed and I was still thinking of it. I got up the next day and put one and one together, two and two together, trying to piece it out-taking things out, putting things in. I finally got it down right, got it together, got it down in my head. Then I went and sang it and everybody went, wow! Then I didn't do it no more, not in the bar. I figured somebody would grab it before I got it copyrighted. So I sent it to Washington, D.C., the Library of Congress, and I got it copyrighted. After I got it copyrighted I could do it in the bar. So then if anybody got the idea to do it I had them by the neck, because I had it copyrighted. About two months later I recorded it. I was on Vee-Jay then. And the record shot straight to the top. Then, after I did it, the Animals turned around and did it. That barmaid felt pretty good. She went around telling everybody I got John Lee to write that song. I gave her some bread for it, too, so she was pretty happy."

In closing, John was good enough to supply me with a few thoughts about some of his other famous songs.

"90 Days": "She left you and you love her, but you're gonna give her 90 days to get back home. If you ain't home in 90 days I'm gonna get somebody else. Not 91. I mean 90. It starts off, 'I'm gonna give you 30 days to get back home, but because I love you I'm gonna give you 60 more.'"

JOHN LEE HOOKER

"My First Wife Left Me": "That's one of my favorites. It came to me that so many men get married and their wives leave them. So I decided to write a song like that. It's so sad that every time I sing it I feel a teardrop in my eye. I see my audience – even the young folks. They're sitting there with their heads hanging down."

"I'm Jealous": "This is a new song-I'm jealous and I can't control the feeling. When you're jealous you can't control that. Your mind runs away with you. If you're jealous of your old lady everywhere she goes you think she's out with somebody else, or trying to pick up somebody."

"Tupelo": "That's a true song about a flood that happened in Tupelo when I was a kid of about seven or eight years old. It completely destroyed the town. People never forgot it. So when I grew up and got famous, I wrote about it and it brought back memories to a lot of people." ■

"Baby Please Don't Go" by John Lee Hooker

10 EPIC STOMPBOX MOMENTS

by **Pete Prown**

1

ROLLING STONES
"(I CAN'T GET NO) SATISFACTION" (1965)

Keith Richards' riff on this smash single is one of the most important moments of rock history. While initially imagining the song's central riff as a horn arrangement, Keith cut the song using a new Maestro FZ-1 Fuzztone as a placeholder for the horns, which he thought would be added later. Instead, the Stones' producer loved the sound and released the single with Keith's fuzzbox part. *Voila!* Guitar history was changed forever.

The effects pedal, or stompbox, is one of the greatest tools for any guitarist. All within a small, metal housing, players can turn on a powerful sonic effect that can move mountains. Witness Jimi Hendrix's legendary solo on "All Along the Watchtower," a song that features overdrive, wah-wah, delay and reverb, modulation, and octaver in just a few minutes. Let's check out a few other great moments in guitar pedal-dom.

2

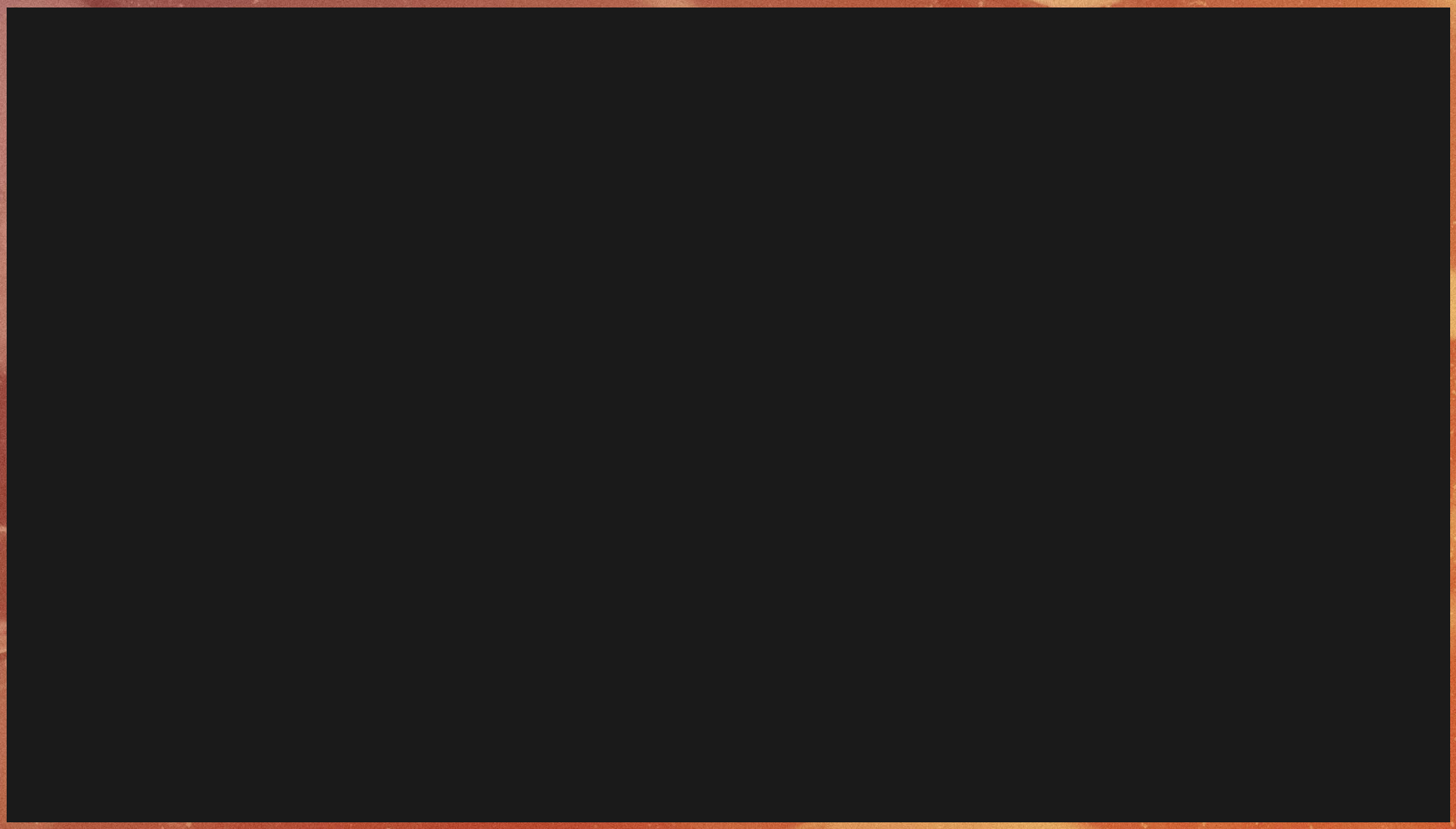
CHICAGO
"25 OR 6 TO 4" (1970)

There are tons of great wah-wah solos but this is a real keeper. Guitarist Terry Kath was a blazing rock player, but also had a jazz-based sense of melody and phrasing. On this early Chicago hit, Terry sped all over the fingerboard with tasty runs before stomping on a wah pedal for the finale.

3

JOE WALSH
"ROCKY MOUNTAIN WAY" (1973)

When you talk about Joe Walsh, you have to talk about the Heil Talkbox. You have to think of this weird box as actually something of a backward speaker cabinet. You plug your guitar into the unit, which creates a sound; and that output is fired down a plastic tube by a speaker "driver." The guitarist puts the other end of the tube in his mouth to shape the sound as it comes out, while a vocal mic grabs that final effect and sends it through the PA. Sounds complicated but as Walsh, Peter Frampton (in "Show Me the Way"), and Jeff Beck (in "She's a Woman") found out, the talkbox is also a great way to get your guitar on the radio.



"Rocky Mountain Way" by Joe Walsh Live from Daryl's House

4

ROBIN TROWER

"BRIDGE OF SIGHS" (1974)

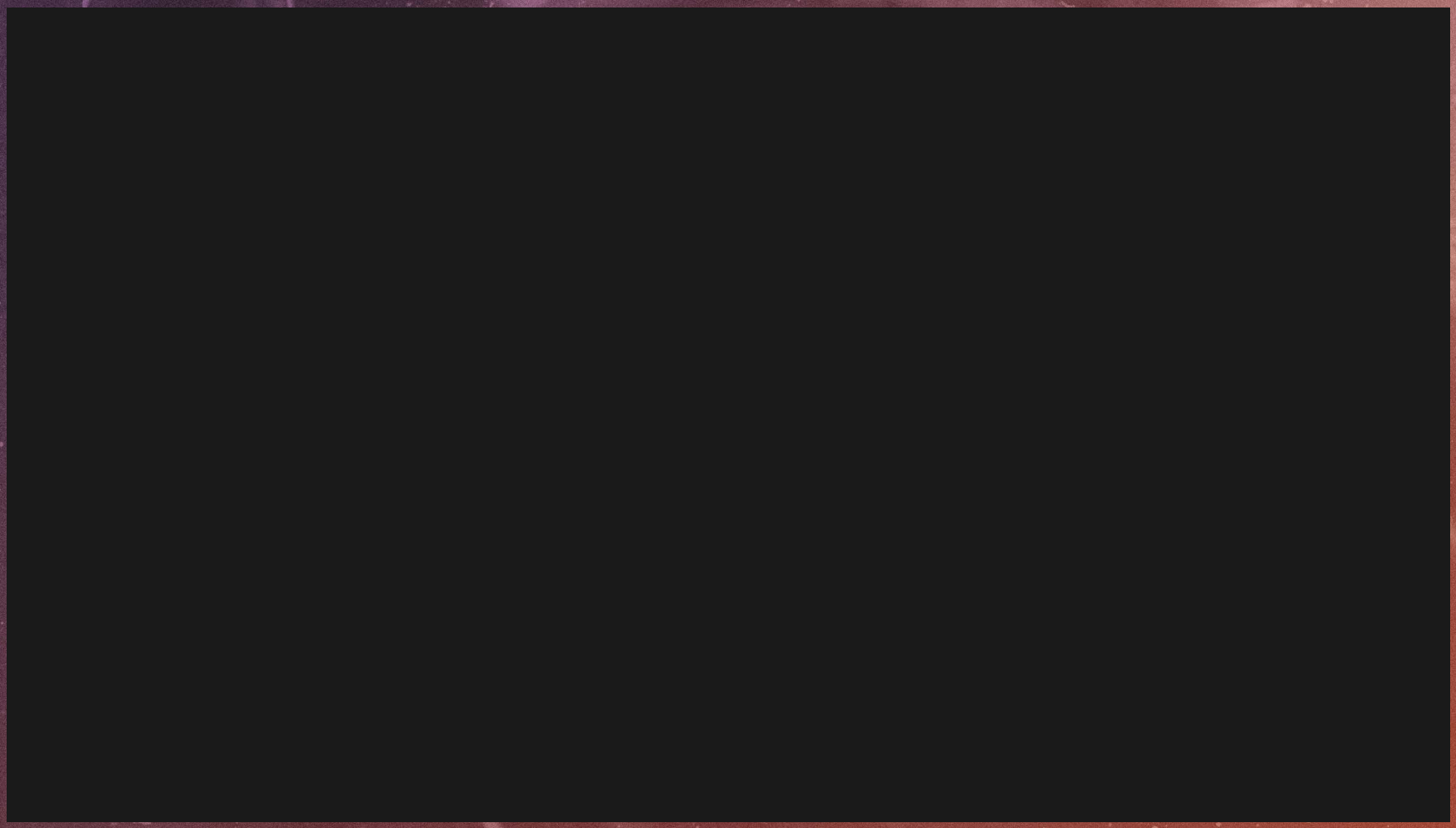
Armed with a Stratocaster, 100-watt Marshall, and a Uni-Vibe pedal, Robin created this slow, mesmerizing dirge. The Uni-Vibe is a guitar modulation pedal meant to simulate the trembling tone of a rotating Leslie speaker (originally made for organs). Some people think of this box as a phaser, while others think of it as a type of vibrato or chorus. But as Robin showed us, the Uni-Vibe made his Strat swirl and scream like no other guitarist since Hendrix. This is simply legendary use of guitar tone and effects.

5

RUSH

"HEMISPHERES" (1978)

Alex Lifeson of Rush was one of the earliest artists to introduce the venerable chorus pedal to rock 'n' roll. This circuit splits a guitar signal adding a slight delay and vibrato to one half, while leaving the other half dry. On the *Hemispheres* album, the Canadian rocker deployed a Boss Chorus on the 18-minute title epic with shimmering power chords and snarling solos. By the mid-80s, just about every rock guitarist owned a chorus thanks in large part to Mr. Lifeson along with another heavy user, Andy Summers of the Police.



"Bridge of Sighs" by Robin Trower

6

VAN HALEN
"ATOMIC PUNK" (1978)

With an MXR Phase 90 box, Eddie rubs the strings at the beginning with a brash, percussive effect before launching the main phased riff. Van Halen also used this phase shifter on "Unchained," "And the Cradle Will Rock," and "Ain't Talkin' 'Bout Love."

7

YES
"OWNER OF A LONELY HEART" (1983)

The British prog band recharged their career with this pop-rock hit featuring new axeman Trevor Rabin and his wild solo. Trev used an MXR Pitch Transposer set to a 5th-note harmony yielding a brash, industrial texture. The effect was a far cry from the typical shred solo of the day and established Rabin as one of the freshest innovators of 80s rock.

8

STEVE VAI
"TOUCHING TONGUES" (1993)

The DigiTech Whammy Pedal was a pedal-based pitch transposer popularized by Joe Satriani, Pink Floyd, Rage Against the Machine, and Steve Vai. In this guitar ballad, listen to Vai push the range of his multi-tracked guitars through the roof with the Whammy Pedal to create weird, whimsical guitar effects from Munchkinland. Not surprisingly, the pedal soon became one of the most popular effects of the 90s.

9

SOUNDGARDEN
"BLACK HOLE SUN" (1994)

This grunge epic combines several "wet" effects such as vibrato and chorus. Guitarist Kim Thayil had the Jim Dunlop Rotovibe and the Hughes & Kettner Rotosphere boxes mounted on his pedalboard. As a result you can hear eerie, dripping chord arpeggios in the verse. Later, he comes in with molten power chords and a wah-wah for the kick-ass solo.

10

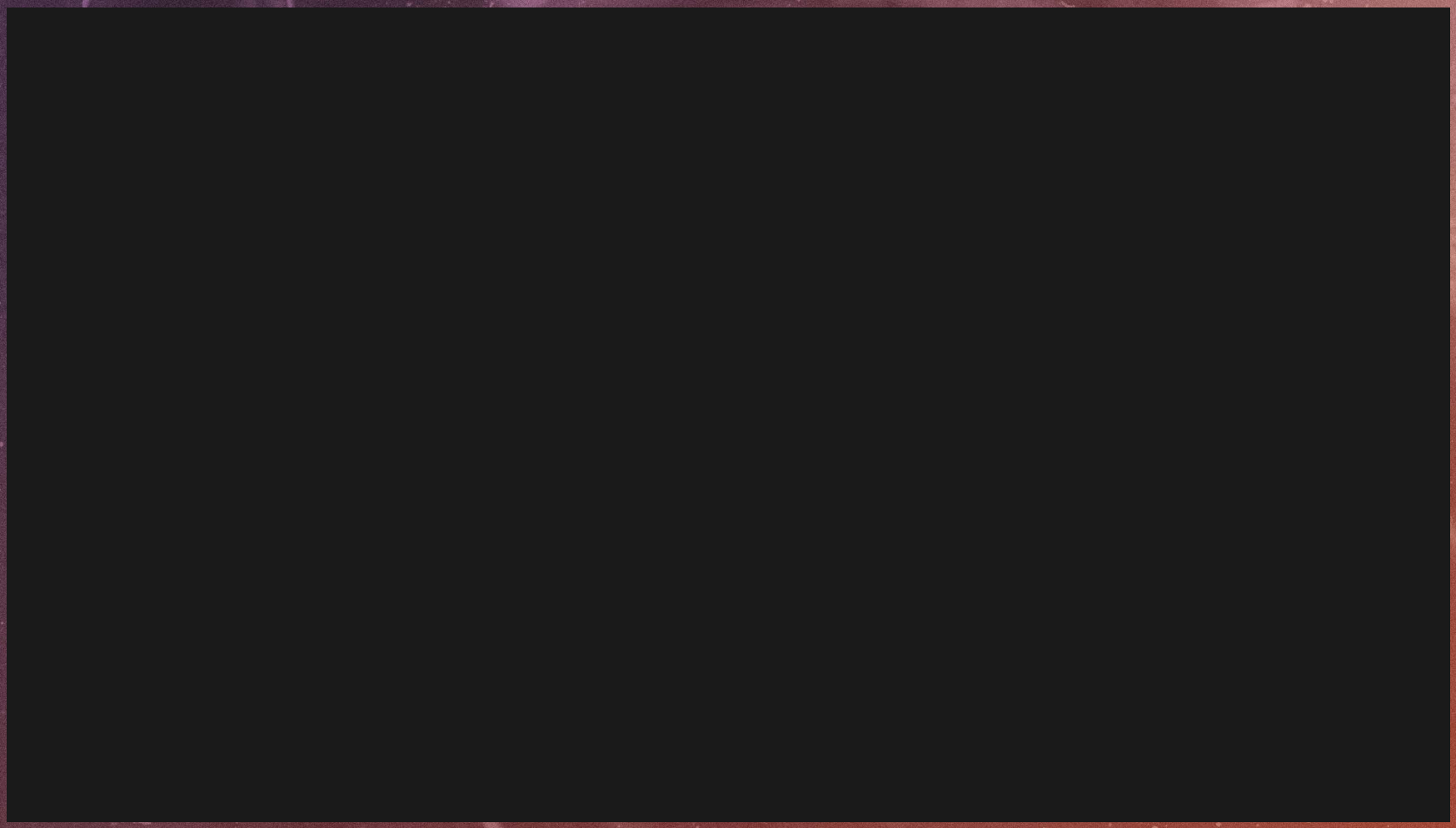
U2

"MYSTERIOUS WAYS" (1991)

The Irish super group reinvented themselves on 1991's *Achtung Baby* album thanks to a new focus on hip-hop and electronica, but still retained their trademark passion. This mega-hit benefited from The Edge's use of a Korg A3 digital signal processor set to Funk Wah, a preset of auto-wah envelope filtering with additional reverb, delay, flanger, and overdrive. The thick, extreme wah sound pushed "Mysterious Ways" to become one of U2's biggest hits.

10 EPIC STOMPBOX MOMENTS

Pete Prown is the leader of Guitar Garden, which has several CDs to its credit, as well as a veteran guitar journalist. He also writes fiction, available at **www.peteprown.com**



"Mysterious Ways" by U2

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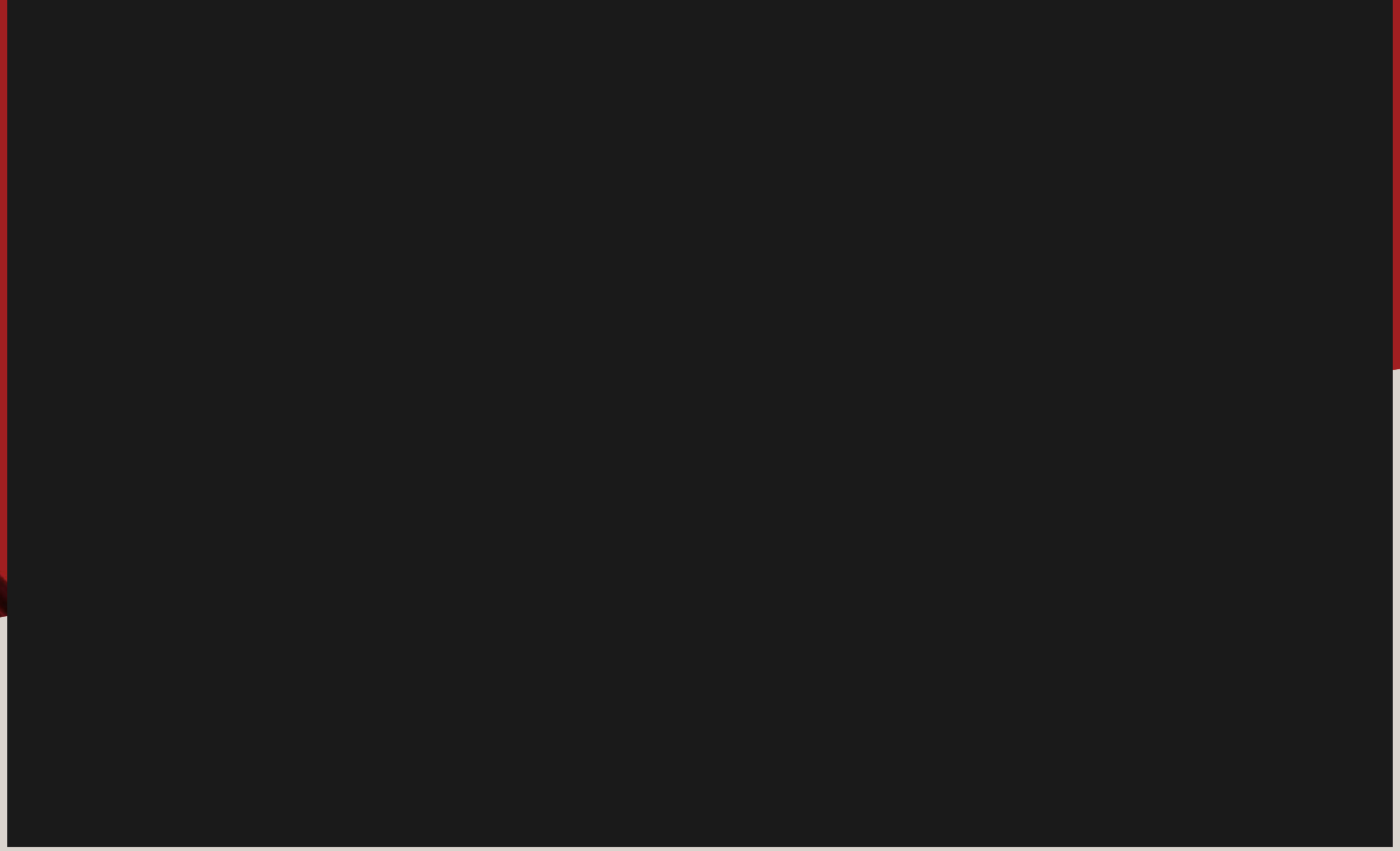
Eric Clapton Style Lesson

Dubbed one of the 100 greatest guitarists of all time, the legendary Eric Clapton is a blues force to be reckoned with. In this Artist Study, Guitar Tricks instructor Tom Finch will help you tackle this icon using some fun licks – breaking down his style from his Bluesbreaker days, to Cream, and to his acoustic blues playing in general. ■

CLICK HERE FOR FULL FREE LESSON



Wes Montgomery Style Lesson

Learn how to play the unique style of one of jazz's greatest, Wes Montgomery. Montgomery was a genre master and employed the use of octaves, incorporated his thumb in strumming, and played with single-note lines. Guitar Tricks instructor Hanspeter Kruesi will guide you through this Artist Study set against some fun backing tracks. ■

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Focusrite®

iTRACK DOCK STUDIO PACK & iTRACK STUDIO

Review By **Pete Prown**

Known for their world class preamps and studio gear—many of which have been used on the greatest recordings of all time—Focusrite is also intent on porting down their technology to folks getting into home recording for the first time. The iTrack Dock Studio Pack and iTrack Studio are both “all inclusive” packages that aim to get musicians recording as quickly as possible without the need to buy too much additional gear. All you need is a tablet or computer and you’re ready to go.

iTRACK STUDIO: FEATURES

The iTrack Studio (**$249.99**) is a popular concept: an interface box that connects to your Mac, PC, or iPad with the appropriate cable (USB or Device Link-to-Lightning cable). If you're new to this world, the actual box is the thing that converts your analog guitar, keyboard, or microphone signal to a digital signal within the computer or tablet for editing and sharing. The iTrack has a real Focusrite microphone preamp with an XLR input as well as a 1/4-inch instrument input for, in our case, a guitar.

The iTrack Studio also gives you headphones, a condenser microphone, and an XLR cable. Once you register online, download the recording software, such as Ableton Live Lite and the Focusrite Scarlett Plug-in suite of effects, which provides EQ, compression, and reverb. (The unit also works with iOS and OS X versions of GarageBand). Now you're ready to start cutting tracks.

The front of the iTrack interface provides you with Gain controls for the XLR and line inputs, both of which have LED "gain halo" rings to let you know if your input levels are correct: red for too hot a signal (causing distortion or clipping) and green for the correct level. There's also a 48-volt phantom power switch to juice the condenser mic, as well as a big Monitor knob to control the overall output. If you hear any delay or "latency" in your input signal, hit the Direct Monitor switch and you will hear exactly what is going to the monitors without any delay. The outputs are phono plug-types for smaller powered speakers. If you plan to use larger 1/4-inch speakers, you will need to get adapters.

iTRACK DOCK STUDIO PACK: FEATURES

The iTrack Dock Studio Pack (**$399.99**) works similarly to the iTrack Studio, except the base "dock" unit is specifically designed to cradle an Apple iPad (the

iTRACK DOCK STUDIO PACK

Focusrite®
iTRACK STUDIO

lightning connector can slide to adapt the unit to different iPad versions, including iPad Air, Mini, 4th generation, and Retina display). The dock itself has two Focusrite preamps with XLR and line-level inputs for keyboard, plus one 1/4-inch instrument plug for your guitar or bass. Another perk is that the dock comes with its own power supply and charges the iPad while you're recording.

The iTrack Dock has overall Monitor and Headphone volume knobs, as well as channel gains (with LED halo lights) and a Direct Monitor button to combat latency. You also get HP60B headphones, a mic clip, and a CM258 condenser microphone with its own XLR cable.

For software, you can download Focusrite's Tape app, which is a cool 2-track unit that is very visual (it looks like a vintage reel-to-reel tape

recorder) and very easy to use. Along with capturing your music, it can also provide quick mastering and you can share your music to social media. You can also use GarageBand or the recording app of your choice.

PLUGGED IN

On the job, the results are similarly excellent and will let you get your music down before the creative spark disappears. The iTrack Studio and iTrack Dock Studio Pack are both designed for the aspiring musician who wants to work quickly and not get bogged down with the geeky nuances of digital recording. They want to make music and share it. The audio quality is superb on both units.

VERDICT

Both Focusrite interfaces will do the job extremely well all without a steep learning curve – whether you want iPad simplicity (iTrack Dock) or the ability to work with your existing computer or laptop (iTrack Studio). So what are you waiting for? When it comes to digital recording, the iTracks are about as easy as it gets. ■

iTRACK STUDIO

Pete Prown is the leader of Guitar Garden, which has several CDs to its credit, as well as a veteran guitar journalist. He also writes fiction, available at **www.peteprown.com**

PRS PAUL REED SMITH GUITARS T.M.

S2 STANDARD 22 IN MCCARTY TOBACCO SUNBURST

Review By **Dave Celentano**

STREET PRICE **$999**

Always curious to find out what new guitars PRS is cooking up, I was excited to review their "S2 Standard 22" – a no-frills, solid-body electric for players who want comfort, great tone, versatility, and playability without breaking the bank. S2 Standard 22 is hand built in their Stevensville, Maryland factory with the same craftsmanship, quality, and playability you'd expect from their top shelf guitars. While many PRS guitars are pieces of art, sporting visually stunning wood designs, finishes, and instantly recognizable 'birds in flight' fingerboard inlays, the S2 Standard 22 is toned down with a solid mahogany body and neck, McCarty Tobacco Sunburst satin finish, and fretboard dot inlays.

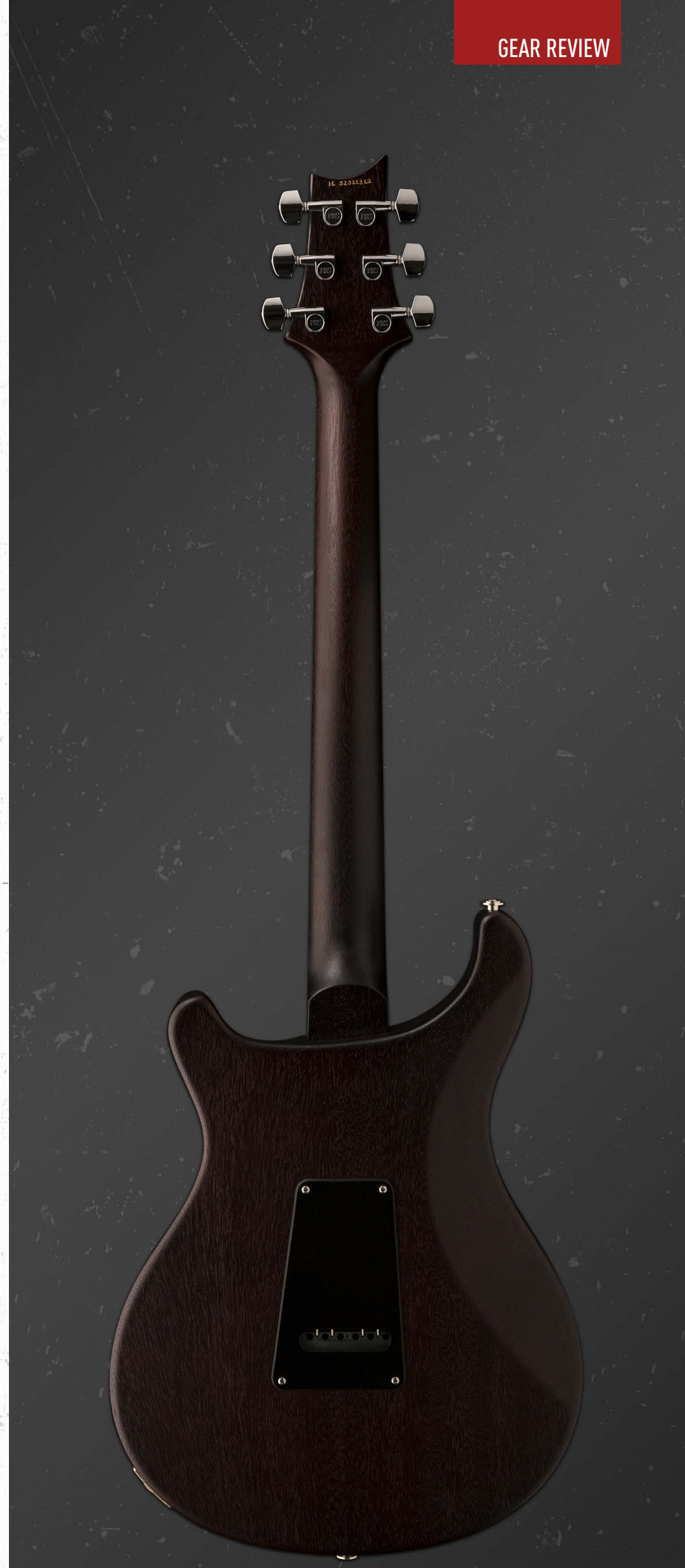
FEATURES

Right out of the box, the S2 Standard is action-ready with an immediately satisfying tone and Pattern Regular fast-action neck profile that practically plays itself! S2 Standard 22 sports a 25” scale length, which is a sweet spot between the traditional scale lengths of Fender and Gibson, and something that will definitely entice players in both camps. S2 Standard 22 is a versatile instrument equipped with two PRS designed 85/15 “S” humbucker pickups in the bridge and neck positions providing a plethora of tone options – from rock and metal crunch to spanky, sanctified blues. Can I get a hallelujah! Add some overdrive distortion and these pickups will scream for mercy, or clean it up and roll the tone knob back a bit for old-school jazz parlance. Combining the 3-way blade pickup selector switch and push/pull tone knob to access the split coil option provides six foundational ready-to-use voices and a broad tonal range making the S2 Standard 22 an ideal workhorse for gigging musicians, no matter what music genre you’ll be playing tonight.

The mahogany body and neck combine for a classic midrange honk and sustain with a modern look and design. Whether in a practice environment or rocking out on stage, the fatigue-reducing beveled and contoured body will feel comfortable up against your frame and in your hands. The S2 Standard is different from other PRS models in that it has a solid mahogany body opposed to an additional maple top, and a super thin, satin finish that’s just enough to protect the wood while allowing resonation that speaks all the way to your amplified tone.

PRS avoided the traditional screw-in whammy bar design in favor of an efficient pop-in that can be installed and removed in record time compared to its predecessor, so you can get to unleashing those whammy bar desires lickety-split. The bar has a smooth feel and is set in the floating position to both raise and lower pitch – a particularly great feature for adding subtle vibrato to chords. The system stays in tune remarkably well with help from PRS locking machine heads and a unique headstock design minimizing the string angle from nut to tuners and increasing tuning stability. Top it off with a complimentary PRS premium-padded gig bag equipped with versatile shoulder straps and grab handle that'll make your urban trek a breeze.

For more information visit:
https://goo.gl/TMg1VG



VERDICT

From day one PRS has built Grade A guitars that look amazing, feel great, and sound spectacular. Whether it's one of the Santana models or something from their entry-level lines, for the money a PRS guitar is unbeatable. PRS considered every detail on the S2 Standard, delivering a guitar designed and built by guitarists for guitarists, including the wallet friendly price point. ■

mono®

M80-EG ELECTRIC GUITAR CASE

Review By **Dave Celentano**

STREET PRICE **$176**

The gig bag has certainly come a long way since I started playing guitar. Back in the day they had little or no padding and offered almost no protection. Basically they were just a flimsy sack to carry your instrument. Enter Mono's M80-EG deluxe gig bag with just about everything you could ever want in a case without the awkwardness and restrictions of a hard-shell. From the bar-raising M80 series, this hybrid gig bag is the evolution of lightweight travel armor for your instrument. M80-EG combines the lightness and transportability of a soft shell with the durability and protection of a hard case.

FEATURES

Intelligent attributes like the patented "Headlock" protects all headstocks (including the tilt back style of Gibson) from breakage by incorporating a neck support that keeps the headstock elevated and strapped in, while providing a 360-degree pocket of space around this most fragile area. Another improvement is the "Bumper" system, which shields the strap button on the bottom of the guitar and defends its lower bout from damage due to accidental vertical drops. And when it's break time, two military-grade Hypalon rubber soles fastened to the butt of the case, grip the ground like mountain climber boots to rest it standing up, while simultaneously preventing wear and tear. The case is constructed of durable and lightweight foam at the core with a thin, waterproof Sharkskin outer shell with high quality zippers to insulate your instrument from the elements.

Your guitar travels first class surrounded in cushion and soft material that won't scratch the most delicate finishes. And while securing the safety of your guitar is first priority, the creative geniuses at Mono designed a case that protects itself, too! I'm talking about friction spots in cases that are damaged from sharp metallic edges on the guitar. To combat those 'wear' zones an extra layer of tough material is used where the thorny ends of strings on the headstock tear up other gig bags and down at the jagged bridge area.

There are pockets galore with space for cords, picks, sheet music, and other tools of the trade, plus an area for phone, keys, biz cards,

and extra personal items. And when the already plentiful space in M80-EG just isn't enough, Mono's "Guitar Tick" answers with a small storage module carried separately or piggybacked to your Mono gig bag.

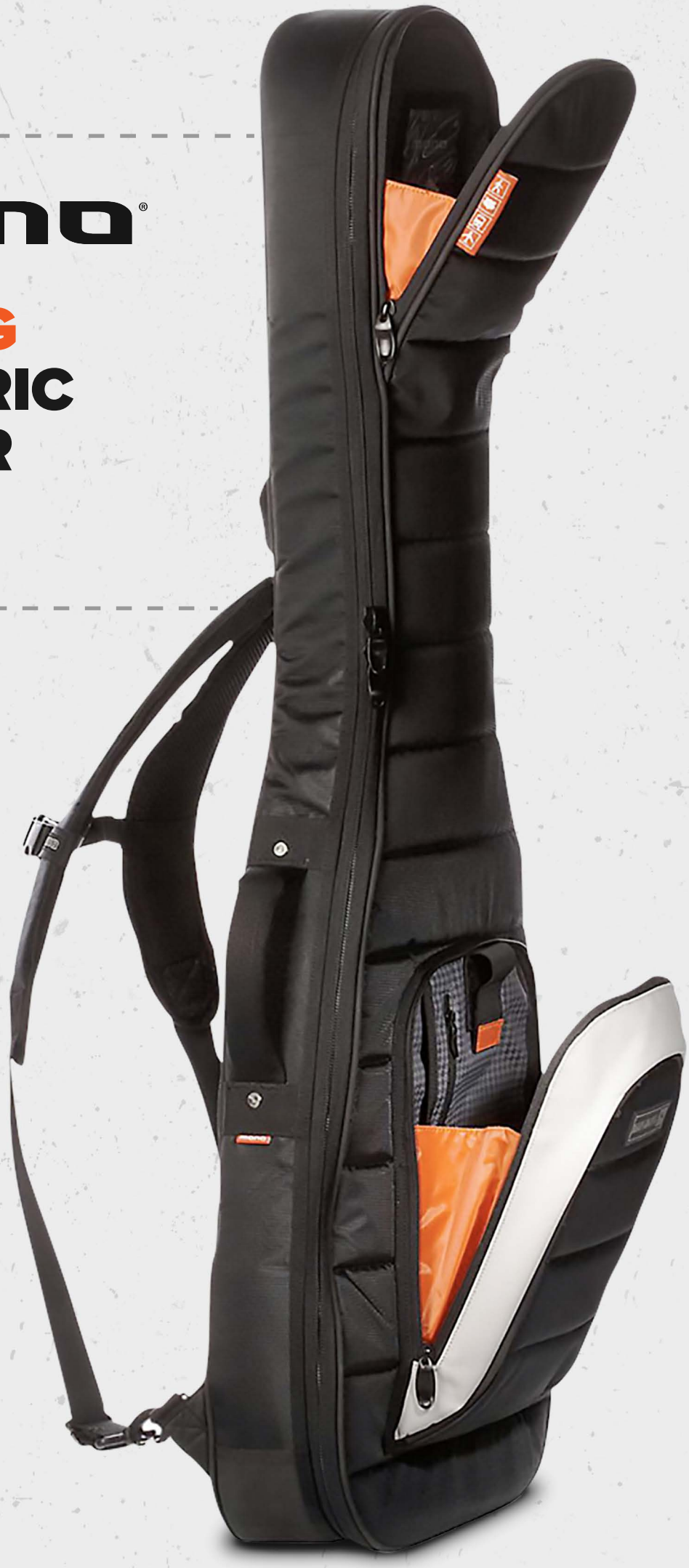
With a mind towards efficiency, flexibility, and protection, guitarists on the go will find M80-EG a welcome treat. The heavy-duty handle grip and shoulder straps for backpack-style transportation allow you to zip through crowds assuring your guitar is safe and sound while making the terrestrial trek. Anytime, anywhere, rain or shine, the M80-EG is your instrument's protective shield while traveling. M80-EG is designed for standard electric guitars including Fender Stratocasters and Telecasters, Gibson Les Pauls, and SGs, and most other solid body styles (check Mono's website for additional shapes). Considering its durability and padding, the M80-EG is surprisingly thin, compact, and light – weighing in at just above 5 lbs. And every Mono case comes with a lifetime warranty along with an easy breezy return policy.

VERDICT

I used the M80-EG for a recent gig and was able to ditch my usual bag of gear, keeping everything in the additional storage pockets and carrying everything on my back with hands-free mobility. M80-EG is the transportation solution for working musicians, offering superb instrument protection, portability, and abundant storage room for all your music essentials. You'd be hard pressed to find a more rugged and durable gig bag. The M80-EG is a premium case that's built to last a lifetime and a great alternative to a hard shell. ■

mono®

M80-EG ELECTRIC GUITAR CASE



PIGTRONIX PHILOSOPHER'S TONE MICRO

Review By **Dave Celentano**

STREET PRICE **$119**

Welcome to the world of small. The little brother to the Pigtronix "Philosopher's Tone," "Philosopher's Tone Micro," is preeminent in the world of compressor stomp boxes. It provides unparalleled tone and pliability for its size at about half the width of a standard pedal. The unit will be a welcomed friend on the most real estate-challenged pedal boards. Sans the Grit control of its predecessor, Philosopher's Tone Micro is a little compression pedal with a giant sound that'll even out subtle playing discrepancies, and provide you with EQ and balance controls the most discriminate ears will appreciate.

Less favorable attributes of typical compression pedals are squashed signal, softened highs, and ultimately a lifeless tone void of dynamics and power, which causes many guitarists to be gun-shy. This is not the case with Philosopher's Tone Micro. PTM boosts weak signals and minimizes harsh tones without losing pick attack, resulting in a smooth, noise-free, and fully-adjustable tone.

FEATURES

In addition to obligatory Volume and Sustain knobs, Philosopher's Tone Micro is upgraded with Treble and Blend for additional fine-tuning options. Treble control expands EQ possibilities by cutting or boosting highs, and is a perfect tool for replacing top-end lost from compression. Along with Treble, the Blend knob mixes the unaffected and compressed signal letting you massage both to get the perfect sound. From mild compression to sounding like air got sucked out of the notes and everything in between, PTM's flexibility is undeniable.

One advantageous setting I discovered was Volume, Sustain, and Treble knobs positioned at 3 o'clock, and Blend at 12 noon proving the PTM to double as a volume boost for solos and song dynamics. Increase the Sustain for squishier compression – perfect for playing just about any Red Hot Chili Peppers song. Philosopher's Tone Micro makes everything easier to play and sound better. Gobs of sustain will have you holding your fist high while shaking infinite vibrato on that bent G-string! For best results, place Philosopher's Tone Micro at the front of your effects chain and be sure to have a power outlet nearby. In order to cram all the technological goodies in one tiny package Pigtronix opted out on an internal battery power in favor of an external 9-volt adaptor (sold separately).

VERDICT

In the world of alchemy, a philosopher's stone turns cheap metals into gold. Similarly, Pigtronix's Philosopher's Tone Micro morphs a dull tone into ear candy. Unlike compressor pedals from the past, PTM's adjustability with EQ, volume boost, and blend options give guitarists unparalleled control over tone while adding a little sizzle and sparkle. Whether you're rocking out, playing the blues, or cooking up some country twang, Philosopher's Tone Micro will do you and your tone right. ■

SUPRO®

1610RT COMET AMP

Review By **Dave Celentano**

STREET PRICE **$1349**

Supro's origin dates back to the 1930s, but it took Chicago bluesmen in the 1950s, who were using the gritty-toned amps, to arouse the ears of young rock musicians in England. As admirers of American blues, blooming British guitarists were discovering and recording with ear-pleasing results – getting a unique, overdriven sound by maxing the volume and pushing the Supro amplifier beyond normal limits, and subsequently authoring a defining hallmark of the British Invasion sound. In fact, Jimmy Page reportedly used a Supro amp on the first Led Zeppelin album to get his gigantic electric tone and canonizing a sound that would ultimately become a precursor to heavy metal.

Today we're gonna blast off with Supro's new 1610RT Comet, a faithful tribute to their combos from back in the day. This burning, hot boutique-level combo amp brings portability, power, and prestige to your look and sound. No digital amp modeling – just 100% pure tube overdrive dripping with tone and muscle power that will have you scraping your jaw off the ground. About the size of a small suitcase, Comet is designed to go everywhere you go and will sound amazing when paired with any guitar in your arsenal. This amp is built for working musicians that want easy-to-whip-up classic tones with no headaches, and makes a great companion for the studio, smaller gigs, or teamed with Supro's 1700 1x12 extension cabinet when more volume is needed for larger shows.

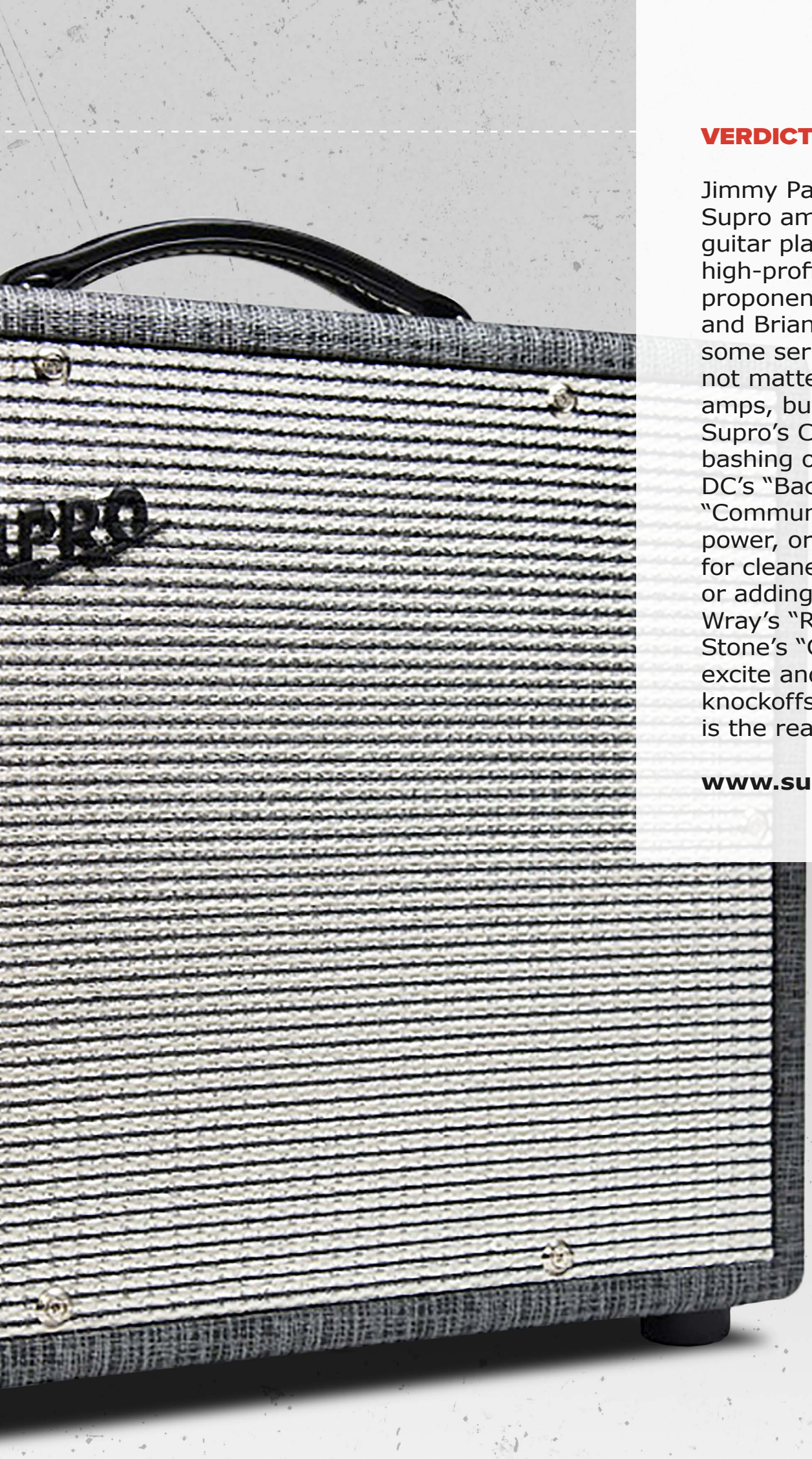
FEATURES

Comet is my kind of amp. It's a straightforward, no fuss, all-tube combo that's extremely simple to operate. On the front panel a single Volume knob serves up clean to classic grit, while the Tone control allows quick EQ shaping. The Class-A amplification, switchable power (6-watts or 14-watts), and on-board, tube-driven reverb and tremolo effects provide flexibility for a variety of applications with Speed and Depth knobs letting you dial in specific parameters

for the latter. From subtle ambiences to deep and spacious surf styles, the spring reverb is designed to enhance the notes while maintaining clarity and definition. A convenient power regulator switch between 6-watts or 14-watts makes this a perfect amp for home and professional use, and quite possibly leaving your other amps to collect dust. Comet uses a suite of tubes including three 12AX7's and one 12AT7 for preamp, and one 6L6 power tube to deliver analog authenticity coupled with class-A technology that provides a spongier tone and warmer overdrive than the competitors. On the back panel are inputs for external speaker cabinets and a footswitch jack to control the reverb and tremolo remotely. Most impressive is how it handles a wide range of dynamics. At near max volume it responds to a lighter touch with clarity, while digging in harder opens up the crunch factor and alluring harmonic overtones. Pushing the pedal-to-the-metal and taking Comet for a ride through my Hendrix and Zeppelin repertoire literally transported me back in time, and even in the 6-watt mode was decidedly loud blasting through the custom Supro 10" speaker.

Comet not only rocks in the sound department, it looks impressive with stylish and period correct '59 Black Rhino Tolex skin, gold control panel with old-school knobs, and white strip wrapping that will gain admiration everywhere you play. And all Supro's amps are assembled right here in America!

Dave Celentano teaches private guitar lessons in the Los Angeles area, authored a multitude of educational guitar books, dvds, and internet tutorials, and released several cds. His latest books "Michael Bloomfield Legendary Licks" and "Triads for the Rock Guitarist" are available everywhere and his latest cd "Desert Storm" is available on iTunes, Amazon.com, and CDBaby.com. For more info check out Dave's web site: **www.davecelentano.com**



VERDICT

Jimmy Page's association with Supro amps is enough to pique any guitar player's interest; but throw in high-profile tone gurus and brand proponents Joe Perry, Joe Walsh, and Brian Setzer and you've got some serious credibility. Size might not matter in the world of boutique amps, but tone certainly does and Supro's Comet is unmatched. Whether bashing out the opening chords to AC/DC's "Back in Black" or Led Zeppelin's "Communication Breakdown" at full power, or ducking the volume back for cleaner Hendrix inspired chording, or adding the Tremolo effect a la Link Wray's "Rebel Rouser" and the Rolling Stone's "Gimme Shelter," this amp will excite and inspire. Don't be fooled by knockoffs. Supro's Comet combo amp is the real deal. ■

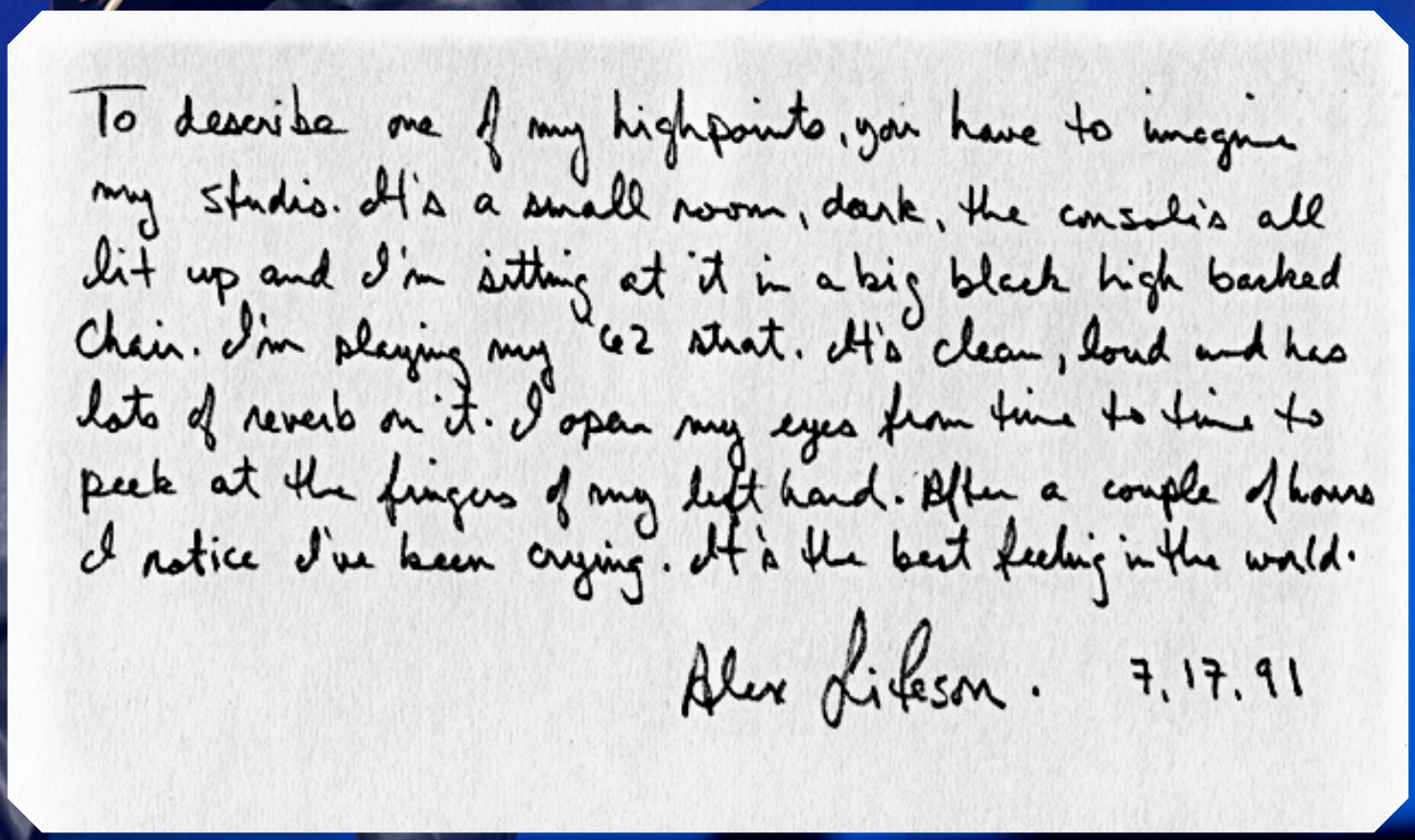
www.suprousa.com/1610rt-comet/

LIFESON

ALEX SHARES A GREAT GUITAR MOMENT

In over 40 years of playing together, the progressive rock band Rush has neither bowed to the industry nor their fans. The bedrock of their huge popularity is built solely on their music. Alex Lifeson's guitar contributions continue to combine the old and the new, the spontaneous and the thoughtful. He is still among the trail blazers of modern rock guitar playing. Several years ago, when I asked him to share a great moment on the instrument, he also proved to be among the most thoughtful. ■

Alex Lifeson by Ken Settle


To describe one of my highpoints, you have to imagine my studio. It's a small room, dark, the console is all lit up and I'm sitting at it in a big black high backed chair. I'm playing my '62 strat. It's clean, loud and has lots of reverb on it. I open my eyes from time to time to peek at the fingers of my left hand. After a couple of hours I notice I've been crying. It's the best feeling in the world.

Alex Lifeson. 7.17.91

WE HOPE *YOU* ENJOYED OUR EIGHTH ISSUE.

We look forward
to sharing more with *YOU*.

TELL US WHAT *YOU* THINK!

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